

THE  
COMPLAINT  
OF A

Sanctified Sinner answered:

OR, AN  
EXPLANATION  
OF THE

Seventh Chapter of the Epistle of Saint *PAUL*  
to the *ROMANS*, delivered in divers  
SERMONS.

Preached by *Edward Elton*, Bachelour in Divinity, and  
Preacher of Gods Word at *St. Mary Magdalens Barmondsey*  
near *LONDON*.

AND  
Now by him published, intending the common good  
and profit of Gods Church.

Isaiah 57. 19.

*I create the fruit of the lips to be peace, peace unto them that are far off, and to  
them that are near, saith the Lord, for I will heal them.*

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THE  
COMPLAINT  
OF A  
Sanctified Sinner.

Rom. 7. Verf. 1.

1. *Know ye not, Brethren, (For I speak to them that know the Law,) that the Law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?*



IN this seventh Chapter the Apostle bends his force against an aspersiō and foul imputation, that some either wicked, or weak, either did, or might cast upon him (namely) this; That he should vilifie and abase the Law of God, too much and more then was meet, In that he said Chap. 5. 20. that the Law did increase sin: That the Law, entring, sin abounded, upon occasion of that speech of the Apostle, some haply thought, and it may be some did not stick to

The general purpose and drift of the Apostle in this Chapter.

utter it, that the Apostle did wrong the Law, and did too much abase it; and therefore in this Chapter he clears himself, from doing any wrong at all to the Law, and shews how his speech may be understood, and how it may receive a right and good construction, and not be in any sort prejudicial to the Law. And in this Chapter, for the general argument and matter of it: the Apostle shews how true Believers are freed and delivered from the Law, and upon occasion of that, he meets with some cavils and calumnies that might be brought against the Law; commending it, and shewing the true use of it, and withal sets forth in his own example, the combat and fight that is between the Flesh and the Spirit, in such as are truly regenerate. In these things stands the sum and substance of this seventh Chapter.

The generall matter of this Chapter.

Now the parts of it are these three.

The first, is a declaration how true Believers are freed from the Law, from the beginning of the Chapter to the seventh Verse.

The parts of this Chapter.

The second, is a clearing of the Law, from some foul blots that haply some might seek to blemish it withal, and a commendation of the Law, with a manifestation of the true use of it, from verse 7. to the 14.

1.

2.

The third and last, is a troubled Complaint of the Apostle; that though he were regenerate, and had received a great measure of grace and sanctification, yet through the reliques of sin still abiding in him, he was far from the spirituality (as I may say) of the Law, and that he was even carnal in respect of the spiritual nature of the Law; and so setting forth in his own particular an example of the combat between the Flesh and the Spirit in them that are truly regenerate, from Verf. 14. to the end of the Chapter.

3.

Now then to come to the first part of the Chapter: The first part of it shewing how true Believers are freed from the Law; (we must know that it hath respect



The summe of  
the first part.

respect to that which the *Apostle* had said *vers. 14.* of the former Chapter, That true *Believers* are not under the Law, but under Grace. For from that Verse to the beginning of this Chapter, the *Apostle* hath been busied in refuting a certain Objection that some might bring against that Proposition of his, and having removed that Objection, he returns to that he there propounded, and doth here prove that true Believers are freed from the Law; shewing how they are freed from it.

His argument to that purpose is, from the state and condition of true Believers, namely this;

That true Believers are dead to the Law; and thus the *Apostle* reasons: Dead men are not held under the Law, they are freed, and they are delivered from it. But such are you, and such are we, as many as truly believe in Christ are dead to the Law; and therefore we are freed and delivered from it.

The first Proposition of this Argument is in the first Verse, not in expresse terms, but easie to be gathered from thence.

The second Proposition is in Verse 4. and these two Propositions being conceived, the Conclusion must needs follow upon them.

The amplifica-  
tion of it by a  
similitude,  
wherein are  
three propor-  
tions.

Now both the first and second Proposition of this argument, are further set forth by a similitude taken from the Law of Matrimony, wherein there be three proportions; as,

1.

First, like as a woman is free from her husband when he is dead, and is not any longer bound to that man, by the Law of Marriage, *Vers. 2.* and

2.

Secondly, as her husband being dead, she may take another husband, and so doing is no *Adulteresse*, *Vers. 3.*

3.

And the third is implied, that as such a woman may bring forth children by another husband.

Then followeth the reddition and correspondent parts answerable to these three, *Vers. 4.* that so true Believers are, first, dead to the Law; and, secondly, that they are married to Christ; and, thirdly, that they may bring forth fruit to him.

And that third correspondency is further amplified in the 5. and 6. Verses, by a comparison *à paribus*. That as when true Believers were under the Law, and as it were married to the Law, they brought forth fruit to death: So now, being freed from the Law, and married to Christ, they should bring forth fruit to God. And so we briefly see the general scope of the *Apostle* in the first six Verses of this Chapter.

Come we to the handling of them in order.

#### V E R S. 1.

*Know ye not, Brethren, (for I speak to them that know the Law) that the Law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?*

The general  
matter of the  
first Verse.

**I**N this first Verse, as you see, the *Apostle* affirms thus much; That a man is under the Law, and the Law hath power and dominion over a man, so long as he lives, and no longer; thereby implying, that when a man is dead, he is freed from the Law, and so the general Proposition is thereby implied, That dead men are freed from the Law.

Now touching the truth of this, that the Law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth, the *Apostle* appeals to the Romans themselves, and to their own knowledge; affirming that they knew it to be a truth, delivering his mind to them by way of interrogation, which is more emphatical: and affirming the thing more strongly, and using a kind and loving term, a compellation of love and good affection towards them, and implying the like good affection from them to him again (*Brethren.*)

*Know*



*Know ye not, Brethren?*

**A**Nd then before he deliver the thing it self, he inserts a proof of it; that the thing he affirms was well known to them, namely this, that they were ignorant of the Law, but had knowledge of it, and were well acquainted with it: For, saith he, *I speak to them that know the Law, that the Law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth.*

So then, in this Verse we have these particulars laid before us.

First, the thing the Apostle affirms, namely this, that while a man lives, the Law hath dominion over him.

The particulars of this Verse.

Secondly, this is not only affirmed as a truth, but as a known truth, even a truth known to them to whom he writ, whom he styles by the name (Brethren)

*Know ye not, Brethren?*

And thirdly, we have the proof of that, that the thing affirmed was known to them, because they were well acquainted with the Law, in these words: (*For I speak to them that know the Law.*)

Let us now a little examine the words of this Verse, touching the sense and meaning of them; *Know ye not, Brethren?* This interrogation or question is as much as an earnest affirmation, as if the Apostle had said; Certainly you know it, I make no question of it; but you do know it, and it is a thing well known to you. *Brethren*, that is, beloved in the Lord, whom I affect in the Lord, and respect, as those that are conjoynd with me, by one band of one Truth, one Faith, one hope of salvation, and by the band of the same Spirit of Jesus Christ, for *I speak to them that know the Law*, that is, I speak to them that are well acquainted with the Law. Interpretation.

No doubt, the Apostle meant chiefly the Christian Jews that were among the Romans, the Jews converted to the Faith of Christ. And by the Law we are to understand the *Moral Law* of God, as appears plainly by that instance the Apostle gives afterward, Vers. 7. *Thou shalt not lust; That the Law hath dominion, &c.* for the right understanding of these words we must know, that the Moral Law of God in the force and strength of it, and as it is in its self considered, is an hard Lord or Master, it requires exact, and perfect, and perpetual obedience to it, and it binds over to the curse for the least breach of it, and through the corruption of nature, it stirres up to sin, as the Apostle shews afterward in this Chapter.

When therefore the Apostle saith, *The Law hath dominion over a man*; his meaning is, that the Law hath power over a man, as an hard Lord or Master, to require of him exact, perfect, and perpetual obedience to it, and to accuse, and to condemn him, and to bind him over to the curse for the least breach of it: and through the corruption of his own nature to stirre him up to sin (as long as he liveth.) The word (*liveth*) is not here to be taken at large, as if the meaning were, as long as a man lives in this world, but with relation to the Law, as it is said, Vers. 4. *Dead to the Law*, so here (as I take it) the Apostle meanes, *liveth to the Law* (that is) so long as a man is a living man to the Law, so long as a man lives under the Law, and is not freed from it by Christ. Thus then briefly conceive we the meaning of the Apostle in the words of this Verse, as if he had said, *My beloved in the Lord, whom I affect in the Lord, & respect as those that professe the same Truth, the same Faith, and hope of Salvation with me, and are knit to me by the bond of the same Spirit of Christ: you certainly know this to be a truth that I affirm, it is a thing well known to you; for I am very sure, I speak to such as are well acquainted with the Law, even with the Moral Law of God; that the Moral Law of God hath power over a man to require of him exact, perfect, and perpetual obedience, and to accuse, and to condemn him, and to bind him over to the curse for the least breach of it: and through the corruption of his own heart, to stir him up to sin so long as he is a living man to the Law, and lives under the Law, and is not freed from the power of it by Christ.*

Come we now to such things as are hence offered for our instruction.



First, observe we that the Apostle delivering this Position,

That the Law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth, he doth not barely affirm it, but he delivers it as a known truth, as a truth certainly known to them, to whom he writ. And he saith to them, *Know ye not?* which is as much as if he had said, Certainly you do know it to be a truth, it is a thing well known to you, *that the Law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth.*

Now, the Apostle setting down this as a thing known to them, to whom he writ, they being such as had lived under the Law in former times, he gives us to understand thus much:

*Doctrine 1.*  
Men are to be familiarly acquainted with that doctrine of the Word of God, that is taught amongst them.

That we are to be well acquainted with the Doctrine we live under, that doctrine of the Word of God that is taught amongst us, and delivered to us, must not be strange to us, but it ought to be familiar and well known to us, and we are to be well acquainted with it.

As the Apostle said here to them, who not long before lived under the Law, You know the extent, the reach and power of the Law, *that the Law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth*; so it must be with us now living under the Gospel: We must be so well acquainted with the doctrine of the Gospel, even with the extent and reach of the Gospel, and with all points of saving knowledge, expressed and made known in the doctrine of the Gospel, as that the Ministers of the Gospel in teaching and preaching, may be able to say to us, and that truly, You know this, or you know that point of saving knowledge is a thing well known to you.

And for this, we have not onely evidence and ground in this Text, but in other places of Scripture, 1 Cor. 10. 15. saith the Apostle, I speak as to them which have understanding, judge ye what I say: as if he had said, That which I deliver to you concerning the Sacrament, (for of that he speaks in the next Verse) I speak it, as to those that are well acquainted with the doctrine of the Sacrament, even with that high and heavenly mystery of the Gospel; and I refer my self even to your own judgment, I doubt not, but you are able to judge and discern of the truth I deliver to you; you are well acquainted with it. And indeed this is the thing that was promised and foretold, Jer. 31. 34. that in the time of the New Testament, men should not teach one another, saying, *Know the Lord*, but there should be such a plentiful measure of knowledge in them, that should live under the Gospel, as that all should know it, every one should be acquainted with the doctrine of the Gospel. And to this purpose are those exhortations, *a* That we should not be children in understanding; *b* That we should not be carried about with divers strange doctrines. And to this end the Apostle saith, Ephes. 4. 8. That Christ ascending up on high, *led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.* Vers. 11. *some to be Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers*: then Vers. 14. *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftinesse, whereby they lye in wait to deceive*; That we should be of riper age in the knowledge of the doctrine of the Gospel; that we should be well acquainted with the doctrine of the Gospel, and with the mysteries of Salvation.

*a* 1 Cor. 14. 20.  
*b* Heb. 13. 9.

*Use.*

Reproof of such as are now ignorant of the principles and grounds of the Gospel.

And therefore certainly this is a duty incumbent, and lying on every one of us, now in the time of the Gospel, the doctrine of the Gospel taught amongst us must not be strange to us, but it ought to be familiar and well known to us, we are to be well acquainted with it: but alas, I must needs here break out into a complaint, it is far otherwise with too many amongst us: How many have we that are ignorant of the very first principles and grounds of the Gospel? they know not God as he hath revealed himself in the face of Jesus Christ. Some are so grossly ignorant, as they know not what Christ is, they are not able distinctly to speak of the natures of Christ, of his Office, and of his Work of Mediation; these are strange things to some, as the Prophet Hosea saith, Hos. 8. 12.

They know not how they may be made partakers of the benefits of Christ; what



what Faith is, what Repentance is, what belongs to Mortification and to Sanctification, nor how they may be saved by Christ; which indeed is grosse and palpable ignorance, and a fault that cannot be sufficiently taxed now in these dayes and times, wherein the Gospel shines most clearly, and especially where there hath been, and now be means of instruction; that men should be so grossly ignorant, it is a monstrous shame, yea it is a sin that one day (without repentance) shall presse men down to the bottomlesse pit of hell: and shall much increase their condemnation and torment in hell.

For certainly, where the means of saving knowledge have been greater, and not a profiting by them in a measure answerable to the greatness of them; their judgment shall be greater, and condemnation deeper; and know it for a truth, it is the Word of God uttered by the Apostle, *Rom. 2. 16.* Thou that now livest under the Gospel, shalt one day come to be judged by the Gospel, and if thou be found ignorant of things revealed in the Gospel, and that thou hast not profited by the doctrine of the Gospel, which hath been preached in thy hearing, even the Gospel and Doctrine of saving comfort that thou hast heard, shall be a Bill of Indictment against thee, and shall condemn thee: For thou being ignorant of the doctrine of salvation, which thou oughtest to know, and mightest have known if thou hadst been careful to learn it, how canst thou look to be saved? yea, consider yet further what the Apostle saith, *2 Cor. 4. 3.* "If the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that be lost: if now in the cleer shining light of the Gospel thou see not that light, but be blind and ignorant of the mysteries of salvation, thou hast cause to fear that it brands thee out for a reprobate, that thou art as it were marked out for a cast-away, and one that without speedy amendment shall be damned in hell: ignorance of the Doctrine of the Gospel in such as ought to know it, and might have known it, is a fearful sin, it shewes not onely want of grace, and want of sanctification but that God even now sits in judgment upon such persons, and hath begun to make known to them their reprobation and final perdition, which he will certainly execute upon them, unlesse they speedily repent."

Oh, let these things be duly considered; and let them stirre up every one that is ignorant, never to rest till he come to a measure of sound knowledg of the doctrine of the Gospel, that alone will yeeld him comfort in life and in death: yea when he cometh to stand before the Judgement Seat of Jesus Christ.

In the next place, the name and title of love, the kind and loving compellation here used by the Apostle, is to be observed, the word (*Brethren.*)

The Apostle stiles them, to whom he writ, by the name *Brethren*; thereby signifying (as I shewed you) his own kind and loving affection towards them, that he did tenderly and dearly affect them in the Lord, and respect them, as those that were conjoynd with him, by the bond of one Truth, one Faith, and one hope of Salvation: Thereby also implying the like loving affection in them towards him again: the point hence is this;

There ought to be a special and mutual love and good affection, between the Teachers of the Word and Gods People: the Teachers of the Word are to love and affect Gods People, with a brother-like affection, and to tender their good, and to shew it forth that they do tender it, by all good means to the uttermost of their power; and the people of God are to take notice of that love where it is, and to acknowledge it, and to answer it with like love and good affection again. *2 Cor. 6. 11.* saith the Apostle, *O Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you; our heart is made large.* And then Vers. 13. he requires the like love of them again. Now (saith he) for the same recompence, even in lieu of my love again, *Be ye also enlarged.* And the Apostle in many places testifies his love to the Church and People of God; as *Phil. 1. 8.* *1 Thessalon. 3.* from the fifth Verse, to the end of the Chapter; and he requires like love again from Gods People to their Teachers;

Obfer.

Doctrine 2.

A speciall and mutual love and good affection is required between the Teachers of the Word and Gods People.



as appears, *Rom. 15. 30.* where he intreats the help of their prayers as a testimony of their love, And, *1 Thess. 5. 12, 13.* saith the Apostle, *We beseech you, Brethren, that ye know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.* Vers. 12. That ye have them in singular love for their works sake. Not to enlarge the point; the reason of this, that there ought to be a special and mutual love between the Teachers of the Word and Gods People, is this;

*Reason.*

It is a love to Gods people, that makes the Teachers of the Word carefull, and conscionable, and faithful, in the discharge of their duty; and it is love again from Gods people to their Teachers that makes them profit by them, when they know and acknowledge the Word of their Teachers; whether they be the words of instruction, of comfort, or reproof, or the like, not to be words of course, but of conscience, and to proceed out of a love and tender care over them for their good. Oh, it makes them to esteem highly of them, and to take profit by them. And therefore for the use of this.

*Use.*

Whence it is that men profit not by the teaching of the Word, as they ought and might.

Hence it is that men profit not by the teaching of the Word, as they ought, and might do; because indeed they acknowledge not the love of their Teachers, and their tender care over them for their good: and especially when they justly tax and reprove them for their sins, then they quarrel with the affection of their Teacher, and then they think he speaks out of spleen or malice, and then they think he loves them not, and so they hinder their own profiting by his teaching.

We must therefore take notice of this duty. and as we see and discern a love and good affection in our Teachers towards us, and that they have a tender care over us for our good, and do shew it forth in instructing, in comforting, in admonishing, and in reproofing us justly for our sins; so we are to take notice of that love and tender care, and to answer it again with like love and good affection; yea even when they do justly reprove us for our sins, and shew us the Judgments of God due unto us for the same.

And let such as will not now acknowledge the love and care of such as labour with them to do them good, by reproofing them for their sins, and seek to draw them out of their sins to amendment of life, know, that the Lord by his overruling hand will so bring it to passe, that in their extremities they shall be forced to acknowledge it, and then they shall justify the love of such as did formerly reprove them, yea haply then they shall wish for their prayers, as *Pharaoh* did for the prayers of *Moses* and *Aaron*, when the hand of God was on him, *Exod. 8. 8.* and as the stubborn *Israelites* did the prayers of *Samuel*, whom not long before they neglected, *1 Sam. 12. 19.* Yea, wicked *Jeroboam* in case of extremity sends to the Prophet, whose doctrine he would not follow, and no worse a Messenger then his own Wife, *1 King. 14.* And we may observe it, that many (who at other times) regard not what the Ministers of the Word say to them, in tender care over them for their good, yet in time of extremity are forced by the powerful hand of God, to send and to seek to them for comfort and haply then, by the just Judgment of God can find no comfort from them, but are left in their misery.

Let us therefore now take notice of the love and tender care of our Teachers over us for our good, and learn to answer it with like love and good affection again; and let us have them in singular love for their works sake.

The next thing here to be observed, is the proof the Apostle brings, that they to whom he writ, knew the thing affirmed by him to be a truth, in these words, *For I speak to them that know the Law.*

The Apostle makes this a proof, that they knew the thing he affirmed to be true, That the Law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth. Because they knew the Law; he reasons from their knowledge of the general to their knowledge of the particular, thus; You know the Law, you are expert and skilful in the Law, and you are well acquainted with the Law, and therefore you



you know this particular; that I affirm touching the Law, that the Law hath this particular use, that it *hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth*. You know the doctrine of the Law, therefore you cannot be ignorant of this particular touching the Law, but you must needs know it that the Law hath this particular use, to exercise dominion over a man as long as he liveth, the Apostle thus reasoning, gives us to understand thus much.

That sound knowledge of the Law, or of any other part of the Word of God, doth necessarily infer a knowledge of the use of the Law, or of that other part of the Word. Such as are thorowly informed in the doctrine of the Law, or of any other part of the word of God, and are well acquainted with it, they know the particular use of the Law, or of that part of the Word, wherewith they are so acquainted. If men knew the will of God revealed in his word, as they ought to know it, either commanding duty, promising mercy, or threatening judgment, they know not onely the substance and truth, but they know also the particular use of that commandement, of that promise, and of that threatening denounced in the Word of God; there is not onely a knowledge of the truth and substance of it, but a knowledge also of the particular use of it. And hence it is that the Apostle exhorts, *Rom. 12. 2.* that the *Romans* should be changed by the renewing of their minde, that they might prove what is the good will of God, and acceptable, and perfect. His meaning was, that they should labour not onely to be inlightned, and to have knowledge of the good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God, but that they should labour also that they might acknowledge it, approve and imbrace it, in the right and holy use of it, and in the use of it pleasing to God. We find that the Apostle thus prayed for the *Colossians*, *Col. 1. 9.* that they might be fulfilled with knowledge of the will of God and then he subjoynes and adds further, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; as if he had said, I pray for you, not onely that you may be fulfilled with knowledge, and have a great measure of knowledge of the will of God, and may know it in the truth and substance of it, but that ye may also rightly and wisely know and understand it, that you may wisely conceive the truth of the Word of God, and may wisely discern the right and true use of it in every particular. These places, not to add any more, do sufficiently clear and prove, that if men know the will of God revealed in his Word as they ought, in the commandements, in the threatnings, and in the promises of it; they know the particular use of those commandements, of those threatnings, and of those promises. And where there is sound knowledge of any part of the word of God, there is knowledge both of the truth and substance, and of the particular use of it. And the reason of it is this.

We must needs hold this for a truth, that the commandements, threatnings, and promises of the word of God, are not soundly and thorowly understood and known, till they be so understood and known, as they are expressed and laid forth unto us in the Scripture. Now in the Scripture they are not delivered in the truth and substance of them onely, but the particular use of them is also manifested and made known; and therefore without question they are not soundly known to us, and we are not thorowly acquainted with them, till we know and be well acquainted with the particular use of them: That being tendered to us in the Scripture as well as the matter and substance of them, and therefore for the use of it.

Let no man deceive himself, fancy not to himself as many do, that thou knowest the doctrine of the word in any part of it, as thou oughtest to know it, because haply thou knowest the truth, and substance, and matter of it, if thou rest in that knowledge thou deceivest thy self, thou knowest not the doctrine of the Word as thou oughtest to know it. If thou wouldst have sound knowledge of any commandement, of any promise or comfort recorded in the Book of God, thou must seek to know it, not onely in the matter and substance of it, but in the particular use of it. That is the thing thou art to labour for, if thou wouldst soundly know it.

*Doctrine 3.*

Sound knowledge of any part of Gods Word, is not onely a knowledge of the truth and substance of it, but a knowledge also of the particular use of it.

*Reason.*

*Use.*

Admonition to such, as rest onely in the knowledge of the truth and substance of the Word of God.



*Quest.*

Haply some may say ; How shall I come to know the particular use of any part of the word of God, and be sure that I know the particular use of it.

*Ans.*

I answer, thou shalt come to know the particular use of a commandement of God, or a promise, or a threatening recorded in the Word of God, by applying of it, and making use of it to thy self, if thou have an experimental knowledg of any part of the Word of God, if thou not onely knowest the matter and truth of it, but thou knowest it for thy self, as *Eliphaz* said, *Job* 5. 27. If thou hast experience of it in thine own particular ; for example, thou not onely knowest what the commandments of God forbid, or what they require, but thou art thereby brought to a knowledg and sight of thine own particular sins ; and thou knowest then for thine own particular direction, and thou not onely knowest the curse of the Law due for sin, but thou art thereby truly humbled through a sight of thine own misery ; and thou not onely seest and understandest the goodnesse of God, but thou doest even taste and feel the sweetness of his mercy, *Psal.* 34. 8. as it is made known in his promises.

If it be thus with thee, certainly then thou art come to the knowledg of the particular use of the commandements, of the promises, and of the threatnings found in the Book of God, and thou mayest be sure thou knowest the particular use of them, and that is the thing thou art to labour for ; and to stir thee up, and to help thee forward in this, consider with me onely thus much.

*"Though a man know the things that are revealed in the Word of God exceeding well, yea if he have such a measure of knowledg touching the truth and substance of the commandments and promises found in the Word of God, as he is able to speak of them to good purpose, even to inform others in the truth and substance of them, yet if he know not the particular use of them, he is nothing better for his knowledg. A man is nothing better for his knowledg of the truth of the sweetest promises of the Gospel, if he know not the particular use of them ; nay, he is much worse ; for that knowledg, if he rest in it and go no further, shall much increase his condemnation. We will easily yield that the knowledg of the death of Christ is a singular knowledg, it is the ground of singular comfort ; yet I dare be bold to say, that even that knowledg, not seconded with a knowledg of the particular use of his death for the remission of sins and sanctification, brings a singular judgment, even a great increase of condemnation.*

Oh then labour we not onely to know the truth and substance of the Commandements of God, and the truth and substance of his Promises, but labour we also to know the particular use of them ; and to that end, let us never rest till we know them for our selves, and have experience of the truth of them in our selves, and that we are able to say with *David*, *Psal.* 119. 105. Thy Word is a Lanthorn unto my feet, and a light unto my path : thy Word doth not onely enlighten me, but it is a guide and direction to my particular steps.

If it be thus with thee, then thou knowest the particular use of the doctrine of Gods Word, and that knowledg will be truly profitable and truly comfortable to thee.

Now we are come to that the Apostle affirms in this Verse, namely this ; (*That the Law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth ;*) and the point hence offered is this.

*Doctrine 4.*  
A man under the moral Law of God, is under the power and dominion of the Law.

That so long as any man is as a living man to the Law of God, so long as a man is under the moral Law of God, so long is he under the power and under the dominion of the Law, the Law hath power over him, to require of him exact, and perfect, and perpetual obedience, and to accuse, and to condemne, and to bind him over to the curse of Law for the least breach of it, and through the corruption of his own nature to stir him up to sin.

Thus is every one that is under the Law, under the power of it, he is under the rigour of the Law, and under the curse of it, and under the Law to be stir'd up by it to sin through his own corruption.

This



This we see clear from this Text, it is the very Proposition of the Apostle : I will no further stand to prove it, but rather shew who they be that are under the Law, for it may be demanded who those be that are under the Law? We now live in the time of the Gospel, and under the preaching of the Gospel, it may seem that no man amongst us is under the Law, and therefore I say the question may be,

Who are they that are under the Law?

Quest.  
Answ.

To this I answer, that all those are under the Law, whosoever they be, that are not freed from it by Christ, even as many are not justified by Christ, and acquitted and discharged from the rigour and curse of the Law by Christ, they are under the Law, and such are all those who as yet do not truly believe in Christ, but are as yet in their natural state and condition, they are under the Law, evidence and proof of this we have, Gal. 4. 4, 5. The Apostle there saith, Christ was made under the Law, that he might redeem them which were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of the Sons : whence we easily gather, that those that are justified by Christ, and adopted to be the children of God, they are redeemed, and they are set free by Christ from under the Law. And such as are not justified by Christ, and adopted to be Gods children they are still under the Law, Ephes. 2. 3. The Apostle saith, that all men are born the children of wrath, that is, are naturally under the malediction and curse of the Law, and therefore so long as they are in their natural state and condition, they are under the Law, 1 Tim. 1. 9. the Apostle saith, the Law is not given to a righteous man (that is) one that is justified by Christ, and just also by a measure of inherent holiness, though imperfect : but it is given to the lawless and disobedient, to the ungodly, and to sinners, to the unholy and to the profane. These testimonies of Scripture do sufficiently clear the point, That as many as are not justified by Christ, as many as are not acquitted and discharged from the rigour and curse of the Law by Christ, even as many as are yet in their natural state and condition, they are under the Law, they are under the rigour and curse of it.

For the use of this point, let as many as are yet in their natural state and condition, take notice of their fearful condition, so long as they are in that state, they are under the Law, the Law hath power over them to require of them exact and personal obedience to it, and to accuse and condemn them for the least breach of it, and they have no whither to flie for succour and relief, they cannot hide themselves under the wings of the Gospel, for they are under the Law, and not under the Gospel, neither can they go to God with any hope of relief from him, for (being under the Law) they come to God as to an angry Judge, clothed with Justice and Judgment, and ready to pour down his wrath, and to execute his vengeance upon them. Few there be that see, or at least consider this fearful condition in which they are, being in their natural state and condition ; Nay, blind and ignorant people think themselves in very good case being in that state, and they like it well, and delight to be under the Law, and they commonly thus plead for themselves, That they say their prayers duly and truly, they mean well to Godward, and they deal truly with all men, and therefore they hope God will have mercy on them, and hold them excused for their offences. Poor souls ! they see not in what a miserable state and condition they are ; thou mayest do all these things and yet be in thy natural condition, and so long as thou art in thy natural state and condition, thou art under the Law, thou art under the rigour and curse of the Law, and though thou live under the doctrine of the Gospel, yet the promises of the Gospel as yet belong not unto thee, thou hast nothing to do with them as yet, and if thou dye and be taken out of this life in that state, thou must look for nothing but judgement without mercy, for the Law is mercilesse, it doth neither promise nor reveal mercy : and therefore take notice of thy fearfull estate and condition, and hasten out it. Come we now to the second Verse.

Use.  
The fearful condition of such as are in their natural state and condition discovered.



## VERS. 2.

*For the Woman, which is in subjection to a Man, is bound by the Law to the Man while he liveth: but if a Man be dead, she is delivered from the Law of the Man.*

**I**N this Verse and in the Verses following (as before I have shewed) the Apostle doth amplify his Argument, by which he proves that true Believers are freed from the Law, by a similitude taken from the Law of Marriage, the several proportions of it I have laid forth heretofore, I will not now stand to remember them. As this second Verse hath respect to the Verse foregoing, it contains an illustration of that proposition; *That the Law hath dominion over a man as long he liveth*; from the example of a married woman; the Apostle having stints that the Law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth. In this Verse doth illustrate and set that forth by the example of a woman that is married to an husband, namely thus, as it is with a wife, as a wife is under the power of the Law of Marriage, and by the Law of Marriage is bound to her husband, during the life of her husband, even so long as her husband lives: so it is with a man that is under the Law, he is as it were married to the moral Law of God, he is under the power of the Law so long as he lives.

Now whereas this example may seem not answerable to the Apostles Proposition, his Proposition being this; That a man is under the dominion of the Law so long as he liveth, and this example runneth thus; That a wife is under the Law of Marriage, not so long as she liveth, but so long as her husband lives; that scruple is easily answered, if we consider the drift and purpose of Apostle, which is this, to shew that death sets a man free from the Law of God, (in what sense we shall see afterward) as death sets a wife free from the Law of Marriage, that is the purpose of the Apostle, whether it be by the death of the wife; or by the death of the husband it skills not, that purpose is still held and kept.

Now in this Verse considered by it self, we have more particularly two things offerred to our consideration:

First, that a wife is bound to her husband so long as he lives, and this the Apostle propounds with a description by her condition, as she is a wife, that she is a woman in subjection to a man, and withal he shews how she is bound to her husband, as that she is under a Law, and bound to him by a Law. The woman (saith the Apostle) which is in subjection to a man, is bound by the Law to the man while he liveth.

The second thing is this, that a wife is freed from her husband when her husband is dead. And that the Apostle sets down in the proof of it, thus: That her husband being dead, she is set free from that Law that binds her to her husband, and therefore then she is freed from him. But (saith the Apostle) if the man be dead, she is delivered from the Law of the Man: and so we see the general matter and substance of this Verse.

*For the Woman which is in subjection to a Man.*

Interpretation.

**T**Hese words are a description of a wife, and the meaning is, for the Married woman, the wife, as the Apostle speaks clearly, 1 Cor. 7. 39. The wife is bound to her husband (is bound by the Law to the man) the word (Law) is not here used in a large sense, for the moral Law of God (though indeed for a branch of it) but more strictly for the special and particular Law of Marriage, even by that perpetual Law made by God himself concerning Marriage, whereof we read, Gen. 2. 24. by which the husband and wife are bound one to another most nearly and most strictly; so as the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 7. 4. *The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and the husband hath not power*



power of his own body, but the wife; and neither may the husband give his body to another woman, nor the wife give her body to another man. That is the special Law of Marriage, by which God hath bound the husband and wife each to other most nearly and most strictly. So then the Apostle's meaning is this: *The woman that is married to a man, is bound by the special and perpetual Law of Marriage to that man alone (while he liveth) that is, during his natural life, so long as that man is alive, but if the man be dead, the words are plain, if the man be dead, that is, if his natural life be taken away and determined by any means whatsoever, she is delivered, she is set free from the Law of Marriage, from that particular Law of Marriage strictly binding her to that man alone, she is then set free from that man, and the Law of Marriage doth not any longer bind her to him. Thus then we may briefly take up the sense of the words of this Verse, as if the Apostle had said.*

*If the woman that is married to a man, the wife is bound by the special Law of Marriage even by that perpetual Law made by God himself concerning Marriage, to that man alone to whom she is married, to her husband, and may not give her self to any other man during the natural life of that man, but if that man's life be taken away and determined, then she is set free from that particular Law of Marriage and the Law of Marriage doth not any longer binde her to that man.*

Meaning

Here first, the main and principal thing intended by the Apostle in this Verse cometh to be considered, and that is the illustration of his former Proposition, by the example of a married woman: That as a married woman, a wife is under the special Law of Marriage, and by that Law is bound to her husband during the life of her husband: So is every one that is under the Law, under the power of the Law. Hence then we see the condition of such as are under the Law, further set forth to us, and the point hence is this:

That such as are under the Law, they are so under the power of it, as a married woman is under the power of the special Law of Marriage: a man that is under the Law, is as strictly bound to the Law, to the rigour and the curse of it, as a married woman is bound to her husband during the life of her husband, and he can no more exempt himself from the power of the Law, nor winde himself from under the power of it, then a wife can justly exempt her self from the lawful power and authority of her husband; and as a wife is to keep her self onely to her husband, so is he that is under the Law to keep himself onely to the Law, and as yet he is to have no meddling with the Gospel: and hence is the Law called by the Apostle, a yoke of bondage, Gal. 5. 1. Be not intangled again with the yoke of bondage, as if he had said, with that which is as a yoke and binds you most strictly to it self. And Coloss. 2. 14, the Apostle calls it an hand-writing, an Obligation, a Bond. And putting out the hand-writing of Ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: in which comparison is notably set out, how strictly men that are under the Law are bound to the rigour of the Law, and to the curse of it, the Law is as a bond, and they are as it were parties named within the Bond, and they are most firmly and strongly bound to the condition of that Bond; that is, to the rigour and curse of the Law.

**Doctrine 1.**  
He that is under the Law, is as strictly bound to the rigour and curse of the Law, as a married woman is bound to her husband, during his life.

The reason and ground of this truth, is the Justice of God; for such as are under the Law are guilty of sin, and as yet are not freed from that guiltiness, and it stands with the Justice of God, that where there is guiltiness of sin and no freedom from it, there death and damnation is due, and men that are guilty of sin and not freed from it by Christ, are most strictly bound by the Justice of God to the curse of the Law, and therefore certainly, such as are under Law, are as strictly bound to the Law, even to the rigour and to the curse of it, as a married woman is bound to her husband, during the life of her husband.

This for the use of it, serves further to discover us the miserable condition of such as be under the Law, even of all such as are yet in their natural state and condition, they (as I have shewed) are under the Law, they are in a most

Reason

Use

The miserable state and condition of all such as are under the Law discovered.

wretched



wretched and fearful condition, they are as strictly bound to the rigour and to the curse of the Law, as a wife is bound to her husband, during the life of her husband, and they can no more exempt themselves from that power of the Law, nor winde themselves from under the lawful power of her husband, during the life of her husband, which is a fearful condition. Let all those consider it that are yet in their natural state, and such are all they, whosoever they are, that willingly, and wittingly go on in any known sin, as in Pride, in Drunkenness, in Malice, in Covetousness, in Swearing, in Sabbath-breaking, or the like.

It is a common thing among men at this time, wherein we keep the memory of Christ his Nativity, to pour out themselves to all manner of disorder, to Riot, Excesse, to Surfeiting and Drunkenness, to Carding and Dicing; well, know it, whosoever thou art, that givest thy self to such disorder, and though thou hast warning to the contrary, yet thou wilt go on in those wicked and damnable courses, it is a plain evidence thou art a carnal and sensual man or woman, and thou art yet in thy natural state and condition, and being so, take notice of thy fearful condition; thou art under the Law, and thou art bound to the rigour of the Law, and to the curse of it, even to the bitter wrath of God in this life and for ever: some think it too much strictness to forbear those wicked and divillish exercises that men commonly give themselves to at this time, and they think they may take more liberty to themselves: they take liberty indeed, but it is such a liberty as the Lord proclaimed, *Jer. 34. 17.* a liberty binding them over to all the plagues and judgments of God in this life, and without repentance to eternal wo and misery in the life to come. Take notice of it whosoever thou art, that givest thy self over to the lust of thine own heart, and goest on in thy known sins wittingly and willingly, thou art in thy natural state and condition, and being so, thou art under the Law, yea the Law is as thine husband, thou art as strictly bound to the rigour of the Law, and to the curse of the Law, as a wife is to her husband, and so thy case is fearful: yea certainly, so long as thou art in that state, there is but a step between thee and hell; *"There is no other difference between thee and those that now lye frying in the fire of hell, but this, they are past recovery, and thou in the great patience and long sufferance of God, art yet suffered for a time, how short or how long thou knowest not, to see if thou wilt accept of grace and salvation offered: which is a thing to be thought on with trembling."*

*Observ.*

In the next place the *Apostle* (as we see) here describes a Wife in these terms, that she is a woman in subjection to a man, meaning the married woman, the Wife; the point hence is this:

*Doctrine 2.*

The condition of a Wife is subjection to her Husband.

That the condition of a Wife is subjection to her Husband, a Wife ought to be a Woman subject to her Husband, that is the thing that chiefly concerns her, on this runs the whole Scripture in every place where the duty of the Wife is expressed or urged, as *Gen. 3. 16.* *Thy desire shall be subject to thy Husband, and he shall rule over thee,* *1 Cor. 14. 34.* *Let your women keep silence in the Churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the Law,* *Ephes. 5. 22.* *Wives, submit yourselves unto your Husbands, as unto the Lord,* *Col. 3. 18.* *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own Husbands, as it is fit in the Lord, and so in many other places.* To handle this point at large, would require much time. Onely take we notice in general, that this subjection the Wife is to yield to her Husband, stands chiefly in two things.

Wherein the subjection of the Wife to her Husband standeth.

In Reverence both inward and outward, and in Obedience. The Wife is to think reverently of her Husband, and to carry in her heart a reverent awe and fear towards her Husband, and to shew it forth by reverent speeches and gestures, and she is to yield obedience unto him in all things honest and lawful, and agreeable to the will of God. Thus did *Sara*, *1 Pet. 3. 6.* *Sara obeyed Abraham, and called him Lord.*

Now





To The  
**RIGHT VVORSHIPFUL**

Sir VVILLIAM GARDENER, Knight,  
Grace and Peace be multiplyed.



*Rue it is ( Right Worshipful ) that there is not the like efficacy and force in the same things, written and read in private, as there is in them being uttered by lively voyce in publick, breathing instructions are most effectual and moving, Gods own quickening Spirit putting life into them according to his promise of more special blessing thereunto made; yet things written have this advantage, they give men leave to consider and to pause upon them, and oftentimes to review them, and they reach further then things spoken: he that speaketh in the publick Ministry of the Word, being thereunto called, and dividing the Word of Truth aright, speaketh to edifying, to exhortation, 1 Cor. 14.3. and to the comfort of those that hear him: but he that writeth profitable and comfortable things, reacheth out the profit and comfort of them to many more. This being thought on and considered by me, and thereunto adjoyned a serious and due consideration of mine own inability, to profit the Church of God (as I am bound, and as I desire) by speaking, and especially that part of Gods Church to which I stand in special relation as an unworthy Over-seer, and to which my good will is to deal not onely the Gospel of God, 1 Theff. 2.8. but mine own soul for the good of it, hath moved me now again to put pen to paper, and to offer these my poor and simple labours to publick view by writing, that in that kind (if God be pleased to adde a blessing thereunto which I heartily desire and pray for) I may be more profitable, not, as though I were able in that or in any other kind to profit Gods Church, as others of far greater worth and sufficiency, stretching myself beyond my measure, 2 Cor. 10. but as willing and desirous to use the best means of doing all the good I can, vers. 14. according to the measure of grace given unto me. In the examples of holy and sanctified Believers, especially such Worthies as the blessed Apostle Paul was, the Church of God hath sensible evidence of the comfort of Gods holy Truth; and no Truth of God, in my slender judgment, is of more special use and consequence, and more needful to be discovered and known, then that which may yeeld comfort to poor weary soules, right dear and precious unto God, cumbred with their inward and hidden corruptions, and complaining of them, and paining and groaning under the burden of their own sinful infirmities; this Truth is fully and excellently exemplified*



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## The Epistle Dedicatory.

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emplified in the Apostle himself in this Chapter, which through Gods gracious and special assistance I have passed thorow, in my ordinary course of preaching to my particular Congregation, all praise and glory be to his holy Majesty for the same; My shallow brain is not able to reach the depth of that comfort that herein is comprised; I have onely dived as deep into it as I was able, and thence fetched out what sweetnesse and comfort it pleased God to communicate unto me.

And now (Right Worshipful) being willing to make these my poor Labours more common, I am emboldened upon your special and undeserved love and kindnesse towards me, evidenced by many infallible testimonies, to shrowd them under your favourable countenance and protection, intreating that you will take in good part this poor token of my thankfulness; not that it can answer that which I owe unto you, but shewing what I would if I were better able. Pardon (I pray you) my boldness, and let it please you to afford me the continuance of your wonted love and kindness, and accept of that which here out of an heart unfeignedly desiring to be thankful, I offer and present unto you. And so, I commend you to God, and to the Work of his grace. The Lord Almighty multiply the blessed fruits of his holy Spirit upon you, and grant you and yours all true peace and prosperity both temporal and eternal in the Lord Jesus, Amen.

Barmondsey neer London, May 6. 1618.

Your Worships in all Christian duties to be  
commanded,

Edward Elton.

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THE

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Now if Wives duly examine themselves touching these things, many will be found exceeding defective, and far short of that duty they owe to their Husbands, yea many will be found such as *Michal* was, 2 *Sam.* 6. 16. even such as despise their Husbands in their hearts, yea, some shew it forth in their speeches and gestures by scoffing and mocking, by tushing and puffing at their Husbands, yea, some stick not to break out into grosse and bitter terms against their Husbands, yea (which is most fearful) sometimes to curse and to ban their husbands, whom they ought to reverence and fear. And as for obedience, Oh, how far short are many Wives, in that some stick not to utter it in plain terms, that they will not do this or that the Husband enjoynes them, though it be a thing honest and lawful, if he would never so fain! for Example, they will not leave off this or that apparel, haply too fine for the matter, or too garish for the fashion; let the husband say or do what he will or can, they will wear it.

Reproof of  
such Wives as  
yield not sub-  
jection to their  
Husbands.

Thus and many other waies are Wives wanting in their subjection unto their Husbands, and they are hardly perswaded to it, because they are so neerly knit to their Husbands, even one flesh with them, and they are their yoke-fellowes, and therefore they think it unreasonable, and that too much is laid on them, that they are enjoined to yield subjection to their Husbands.

Now then, to perswade with such as make any conscience of their duty; let Wives consider these things:

First, if they refuse to yield subjection unto their Husbands, they pervert the order of Nature, it is all one as if the body should refuse to be guided by the Head.

Secondly, they violate the Ordinance of God, for God hath ordained, that the Wife should be subject to her Husband.

Thirdly, they make themselves odious in the sight of God, and of all that truly fear God. And

Last of all, they blot and blemish all other their good qualities: admit the Wife is chaste, wise, discreet, frugal, an excellent Huswife, and such like, yet if she be not subject to her Husband, all these things are nothing worth, she brings a blot on them all, yea, upon her Religion, if she seem Religious, by denying subjection to her Husband, she makes the name and Word of God to be ill spoken of, *Tit.* 2. 5. and she hath but a shew and shadow of Religion, she denies the power of it, she hath no truth nor soundnesse of Religion in her, her Religion will yield her no comfort.

Oh then think on these things, thou wife, whosoever thou art, and be stir'd up to yield subjection to thy husband, and lay aside all reasonings of the flesh, and labour thou to subdue all thy rebellious thoughts, that rise up in thine heart to the contrary, and never rest till thou shew thy self reverent toward thine husband, and obedient to him in all things, honest, lawful, and agreeable to the will of God.

The next thing offered to our consideration, is the first thing here affirmed by the Apostle, namely this, That a wife is bound by the special and perpetual Law of marriage to her husband, as long as he lives; and the point hence is the very Proposition of the *Apostle*.

Obser.

That the wife is bound to her husband, during the life of her husband, even so long as her husband lives; and it is true also of the husband, that he is like-wise bound to his wife, during the life of his wife, and so long as his wife lives.

Doctrine.

The husband  
and wife are  
bound each to  
other, so long  
as they live in  
this world.

The Law of Marriage binds the husband and the wife each to other, so long as they live together in this world: and with this agrees that of the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 7. 39. he there delivers the self same Proposition, that the wife is bound by the Law as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to marry with whom she will, onely in the Lord. And *Matth.* 19. we read, that the Pharisees coming to Christ, tempting him and demanding, v. 3. whether it were lawful for a man to put away his wife for every fault, Christ brings them back to the first institution of Marriage, and saith to them, v. 4. Have ye



not read, that *He* which made them at the beginning, made them Male and Female. Vers. 5. And said, For this cause shall man leave Father and Mother, and cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one, Vers. 7. They reply and say to him, Why then did Moses command to give a Bill of divorcement, and to put her away? Christ answers again, Vers. 8. That Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives, but (saith he) from the beginning it was not so. Where we see that Christ shews that God hath so neerly conjoynd Man and Wife together, as that they are no more twain but one flesh: and though Moses for the hardness of their hearts, suffered them to give a Bill of divorcement; yet it was not so either by the first institution of Marriage, or in the practise of the first Age of the World: it was not so with Adam, with Seth, with Noah, with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, they put not away their wives for every fault, but having taken wives, they kept them till death, as God had ordained, even according to the first institution of Marriage. And from the words of Christ we may take the reason and ground of this truth:

Reason.

That the husband and wife are bound each to other, so long as they live in this world together, and it is this: They are coupled together by God himself, coming together as they ought, and they are so neerly knit one to another, as that they are no more twain but one flesh; the union that is made by Marriage, being so neer and so strict, and being made by God himself, it must needs be a truth, that the husband is bound to the wife so long as she lives, and the wife is bound to her husband so long as he lives, and when man and woman joyn together in marriage and become husband and wife, they are bound one to another during the time they live together in this world. Now then, the use of this concerns both Parents that have children to dispose in Marriage, and also such as be unmarried and purpose to enter into that state of life.

Use.

Parents are to be wise in disposing their children in marriage, and unmarried persons are to be wise in making their choice.

Parents are to be wise and wary in disposing their children in Marriage: And unmarried persons are also to be wise and wary in their choice, for as the saying is, *Dis deliberandum; quod semel statuendum*; great advice and deliberation is to be used in doing that which is but once to be done, and men are to be very careful and very deliberate in doing that which is to be done once and no more during life. Now, thus stands the case in that weighty businesse of Marriage: a man that marries a wife, is bound to his wife as long so she liveth; and a woman that gives her self in Marriage to a man, is bound to that man so long as she liveth: though there prove to be difference and disagreement in their several dispositions and natures, and one of them proves a great and heavy crosse to the other, yet being married, they are bound one to the other, not for a day, a week, a year, or for a certain limited time, but for term of life, even so long as they live together in this world; and therefore doubtlesse great care, and great advice and deliberation ought to be used, both by Parents in disposing their children in Marriage, and by persons unmarried in making their choice.

Wherein that wisdom standeth,

Parents are to endeavor so to dispose their children in that state of life, and unmarried persons are to be careful so to make their choice, as they may look for the blessing of God on their match, and both the husband may find comfort in his wife, and the wife may find comfort in her husband, and to that end special care must be had, that the parties come together in the fear of God; Parents are to provide as much as possibly they may, how to match their Son or their Daughter with one that fears God, and is truly religious, and parties that are to enter into that state of life, are to use the like care, that their choice be in the Lord, that they choose one to match withal in whom they discern piety and soundnesse of Religion, and the true fear of God, and that they come together by good means, as seeking to God to direct them in their coming together, and with consent of Parents; "for certainly it is the chief bond of love, when both hearts are knit together in God: How can there be true agreeing in love, where there is no true faith? and it is a secret poison that



"that destroyes vertue, and nothing destroyes it more speedily, then when the religious are unequally yoked with irreligious and profane. How soon was Solomon turned from the Lord to worship Idols, by means of his Idolatrous wives? We read that *Ahab* was a most wicked man of himself, he sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, 1 *King*. 21. 25. but a wicked wife made him far worse: It is there said, *Jezabel* his wife provoked him. *Jehoram* the King forsook the way of the Lord, and wrought all wickedness in full measure; and why? because, saith the Text, the daughter of *Ahab* was his wife, 2 *Chron*. 21. 6. and many other examples we have of this kind. Oh, then it behoves Parents to look to it afore-hand, how they dispose their children in marriage, and unmarried persons are to be wise and wary in their choice, that the match may be in the fear of God, and with such as are godly; it is the common fashion of the World to look after beauty, wealth, and such like: and if Parents can match their children richly, and where there is a great portion of outward things, though not a dram of piety and Religion, they care not; nay then they think they have done marvellous well, and they have performed a good office: and so it comes to passe many times by the just judgment of God, that they match their children to sorrow and shame; the Lord doth justly punish such, meeting together in marriage, with much trouble, grief and bitter vexation, yea many times with unfaithfulness of one towards the other, and a wife so chosen doth often make her husband ashamed, as *Solomon* speaks, *Prov*. 12. 4. and is as rottenness in his bones, that is, a torment and corrosive to his heart as grievous as the ach of the bones, or corruption of the marrow, which is more painful and more incurable then any outward ulcer or sore in the flesh.

1 *King*. 21. 25.

Oh, then let Parents be wise, and let unmarried persons be wary in their choice. Doe'st thou wish well to thy Son or thy Daughter, and would'st thou not bring on thy Son or Daughter a remediless evil? look then to the disposing of them in marriage: if once thou hast given thy daughter in marriage, prove her husband never so great a crosse to her, and let her wo and her sorrow from him be never so great, there is no remedy, she is bound to him, so long as they live together, and she must endure it: if thou dispose of thy child in any calling or service, if after a time some great crosse befall thy child in that calling or service, thou mayest alter the calling or service: yea, though thy child be bound apprentice, and the apprenticeship prove hard and such as cannot be endured, yet thou mayest by one means or another get the Indenture out of the hands of his Master; but if thou take a wife to thy Son, or give thy Daughter to a husband, thy Son is bound to his wife so long as she liveth, or thy Daughter is bound to her husband so long as he liveth, thou canst not then dissolve or unloose the knot, and therefore be wise in disposing of thy child before-hand, labour to take a religious wife to thy Son, and a woman truly fearing God, and let thy chief care likewise be to give thy Daughter to a religious husband, and one truly fearing God, and then thou mayest justly look for a blessing from God on the match, and the husband no doubt shall finde comfort in his wife, and the wife shall finde comfort in her husband all the time they live together in this world.

Now further, whereas the Apostle saith in this Verse, that the wife is bound to her husband while he lives, but if he be dead, she is delivered from the Law of the man; The question may be, whether onely death doth set a wife free from her husband and nothing else? whether onely the death either of the husband, or the death of the wife, do dissolve the Marriage knot, and nothing but death? that may be the question occasioned from the words of the Apostle.

*Quest.*  
Whether nothing but death dissolve the Marriage knot.  
The Popish answer.

Now if the Papists answer to this question, they will tell you, that indeed nothing but death sets a wife free from her husband, or a husband free from his wife: Though (they say) for fornication one may depart from anothers company, the husband may depart from his wife, and the wife may depart from



her husband, yet nothing but death dissolves the bond betwixt man and wife : these be their very words, and this is their note on this place.

The true  
answer.

Now this is false and erroneous, that nothing but death dissolves the knot of Marriage knit : for we are taught by the word of God, that in two other cases, besides death, the Marriage bond is dissolved : as, first, by adultery, as appears, *Matth. 5. 32.* and *Matth. 19. 9.* and secondly, by wilful and malicious desertion of the unbelieving husband, or the unbelieving wife, *1 Cor. 7. 15.* *If the unbelieving depart, let him depart, a brother or a sister is not in subjection in such things, but God hath called us in peace.*

Object.

Oh but say they (they stick to the words of the *Apostle*) A wife is bound to her husband while he liveth, and if the man be dead, then she is at liberty : therefore (say they) nothing but death dissolves the bond of marriage.

Answer.

I answer, the *Apostle* here speaks of marriage as it stands sound and whole by the the Ordinance of God, that by Gods Ordinance a woman is bound to her husband so long as he liveth.

Again, the *Apostle* had here no occasion to speak of the dissolution of Marriage by any other thing but by death, and therefore he saith not, that nothing dissolves the bond of Marriage but death, but that though the bond hold during life, yet by death it is dissolved, that is the meaning of the *Apostle* in this place, and so his words will not bear out that Popish conceit, against the plain evidence of the Word of God, in other places : That nothing but death dissolves the bond of Marriage.

Note by what  
spirit the Pa-  
pists are led.

This I note to this purpose, to discover to us by what spirit the Papists our adversaries are led, even by the spirit of error and contradiction, yea by the spirit of *Antichrist* and of the Devil; they deny that any thing dissolves the bond of Marriage but death, and yet we finde that they allow of separation between man and wife in many cases, which the Word of God doth not allow.

### VERS. 3.

*So then, if while the man liveth, she take another man, she shall be called an Adulteresse : but if the man be dead, she is free from the Law, so that she is not an Adulteresse, though she take another man.*



The general matter of this Verse is briefly this : That a wife is at liberty when her husband is dead, and may then lawfully marry with another man : but more particularly we have here offered to our consideration.

First, a consequent, which the *Apostle* infers on that which he had before delivered : for having said in the Verse before, that the wife is bound to her husband, while her husband liveth : here he infers on it, That if therefore the wife take another man, while her husband lives, she is an adulteresse, yea, he saith, she shall be so called.

And then he delivers by way of opposition to this, the Proposition chiefly intended by him in this Verse, namely this : That the husband being dead, the wife is at liberty, and may lawfully marry with another man, and that in so doing she is no adulteresse. And this the *Apostle* sets down in the proof of it thus.

That the husband being dead, the wife is freed from the Law that bindes her to her husband, and therefore then she is freed from him, and though then she take another man, she is no adulteresse. But (saith the *Apostle*) if the man be dead, she is free from the Law, so that she is not an adulteresse, though she take another man. And so we see the general matter of this Verse. The words need not long to be stood on touching the sense of them : I will briefly clear them.

Interpretation

*So then, or so therefore, If while a man liveth, she take another man, that is, if while the husband is alive, she joyn her self to another man, and marry another man, she shall be called an adulteresse, the word (called) here signifieth thus*



thus much, she shall be held an *Adulteresse*, and that by the voice and consent of all men, all men that know her shall so repute her, so speak of her, and so call her : we have the same word, *Acts 11. 26.* It is there said, the Disciples were first called Christians in *Antiochia*, that is, they were so named, not by the device of man; but by divine Oracle, and that by a common consent. (*An Adulteresse*, a breaker of Wedlock, a transgressor of the seventh Commandment.) (*But if the man be dead she is freed from the Law.*) These words we had in the Verse before, and I shewed this to be the meaning of them : if the husbands natural life be taken a way and determined, she is free from the special and perpetual Law of Marriage, binding her to her husband, so that she is no adulteresse though she take another man, that is, so that then she is no Wedlock-breaker, nor transgressor of the Commandment of God, though she joyn her self in marriage to another man. So then the meaning of the words of this Verse is, as if the Apostle had said.

*So then, or so therefore, if while the husband is alive in this world, the wife joyn her self to another, and marry another man, she is a Wedlock-breaker, and a transgressor of the Law of God, and that by the voice and consent of all that know her, all that know her shall so speak of her, and so call her, and may justly call her an Adulteresse : but if her husbands natural life be taken away, she is free from that special and perpetual Law of Marriage, binding her to her husband, so that then she is no Wedlock-breaker, nor adulteresse, though she joyn her self in marriage to another man.*

In that the Apostle having before said, that the wife is bound by the Law to the man while he liveth; doth here infer on that.

That if therefore the wife take another man while her husband lives, she is an adulteresse, she is a Wedlock-breaker, and a transgressor of the Law of Marriage : we may note thus much briefly :

That Polygamy is utterly unlawful; for a woman to have more then one husband at one and the same time, or for an husband to have more then one wife at one and the same time, it is a sin, and it is a breach of the commandment of God, and it is directly against the ordinance of God in the first institution of Marriage, as it appears *Gen. 2. 24.* God there saith, that a man shall leave his Father and Mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh, not to his wives, but to his wife, and they shall be one flesh, which place Christ himself cites, and makes yet more plain to this purpose, *Matth.* where he saith : *For this cause shall a man leave Father and Mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh :* see, he brings it to one husband and one wife, *they twain shall be one flesh ;* and to this first institution of marriage had the Prophet respect, *Malac. 2. 15.* when he said : And did not he make one? yet had he abundance of Spirit; and wherefore one, because he sought a godly seed. And we find a flat prohibition of Polygamy, of having two wives or more at one time, *Levit. 18. 18.* *Thou shalt not take a wife with her sister, during her life to vex her :* that is, as the phrase there used signifieth, two wives one to another. That is the meaning of that form of speech, a wife to another, as might be shewed if it were needful : but not to stand on this.

It discovers what we are to think of the Polygamy of the Patriarkes and godly Fathers, in the time of the old Testament, that indeed howsoever the Lord, having promised to make *Abrahams* seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the Sea-shore, *Gen. 22. 17.* was pleased to suffer variety of wives for a time, as a means to encrease that posterity, and so it might in some sort be excused, yet certainly it was a fault and a failing in them, and cannot be justified and defended as a thing simply lawful, and void of sin.

Now here haply some may move this question : Seeing it is unlawful for a woman to have more then one husband at one time, and for an husband to have more then one wife at one time :

Whether after lawful divorce for Adultery, the party innocent may marry another or no ?

Obser.

Doctrine 1  
Polygamy is  
utterly unlaw-  
ful.  
*Gen. 2. 24.*

*Matth. 19. 5.*

*Malac. 2. 15.*

Use.  
The Polygamy  
of the Patriarks  
was a sin.  
*Gen. 22. 17.*

Quest.

The



*Ans.* The answer of Divines, which I hold sound and good, is this; That the innocent party having not the gift of continency, on leave obtained of the Church and Christian Magistrate, may lawfully marry another.

*Object.* It will be said, that then the husband shall have two wives both living at one time, and so the wife likewise.

*Ans.* I answer, No; For after lawful divorce, the parties divorced are not man and wife, the bond of marriage is quite broken.

*Object.* Of some then it may further be demanded, Whether after manifest and known adultery, by which the bond of Marriage is broken, the party innocent may take the party delinquent, the party that hath sinned, upon Repentance, without a new contract and a new Marriage.

*Ans.* I answer, the party innocent may do it, for though adultery do dissolve the bond of Marriage, yet the same bond may be continued, and may grow up again by consent of the party innocent, and there may be a reconciliation between them, 1 Sam. 25. 44. We read that *Saul* had given *Michal* his daughter, *David's* wife, to *Phalti* the son of *Laiſh*, which was of Gallim. and 2 Sam. 3. 14, 15. it is said that *David* sent messengers to *Ishbosheth Saul's* son, saying, Deliver me my wife *Michal*, which I married for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, vers. 15. And *Ishbosheth* sent and took her from her husband *Phaltiel* the son of *Laiſh*. And thus may the innocent party do without a new contract, and a new Marriage.

*Observ.* The next thing observable in this Verse is this; The Apostle saith, *The wife that takes another man while her husband liveth, shall be called an Adulteresse.* That manner of speech is to be observed; *she shall be called an Adulteresse*, she shall be reputed an adulteresse; yea, all that know her, shall so speak of her, and shall call her an adulteresse, a wedlock-breaker; Hence we may easily gather thus much:

*Doctrine 2.* That Adultery is a foul and fearful sin, it is a sin that every one of any judgment may take notice, and is able to condemn, and to cry shame on, yea, the very Heathen by the light of nature were able to take notice of it, Gen. 20. 9. and we find that the Heathen did sharply punish the sin of adultery: but that the greatness of this sin may yet further appear, consider that adultery is not onely a breach of that Commandement of God, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery*, but it is a breach of the particular covenant of Marriage, which *Solomon*, Prov. 2. 17. calls *Gods Covenant*, which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God, even that solemn covenant that was made at the time of her contract and Marriage, both before God, and before the Angels of God, and before the people of God.

Again, *Adulterio* defiles the body, in more special manner then other sins: whence it is that men or women are counted dishonest, if not onely, yet chiefly for the sin of fornication and adulterie. Add to these the fearful effects and fruits of this sin, which serve also to set out the greatness of it: it brings forth an ill name and a poor estate, and a diseased body; the Lord in his just judgment sends an adulterer and an adulteresse, filthy and lothsome and rotten diseases, though they escape the censure of men, and being presented to the Courts of men, they can shift it out by money, yet the Lord suffers them not to escape his punishing hand, but many times sends on them visible judgments in this life; yea, adultery brings smart on the posterity, it is a means to root out posterity. Job 31. 12. It is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase. And which is yet worse, it brings a dulness and deadness of heart, it makes a man or a woman incapable of any good, it is like the sin of drunkenness which taketh away the heart, they are joyned together in this effect, *Hose. 4. 11. Whoredom, and Wine, and new wine take away the heart.* And it further, adulterie makes both body and soul liable to the curse of God, it shuts them out of the Kingdom of heaven, 1 Cor. 6. 9. yea, not onely the body and soul of one, but of two at once, even two at one time, by



by that ſin are enwrapped within the compaſſe of Gods curſe, and whoremongers are ranked with dogs and Sorcerers, and murderers, and Idolaters, and whoſoever loveth and maketh a lye, that ſhall be without the holy City, *Apoc. 22. 15. and ſhall have their part in the Lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone, which is the ſecond death, Rev. 21. 8.*

Rev. 22. 15.

Rev. 21. 8.

Uſe.

We are to take notice of the greatneſſe of the ſin of Adultery.

Let us then take notice of the greatneſſe of this ſin, the world commonly makes light account of it; yea, ſome eſteem it a matter to laugh at, and make but a jeſt of it, and many are come to that height of impudency, that they can even glory and boaſt of it. Are there not ſome that ſtick not to ſay in plain terms, they will love another mans wife, meaning indeed, they will luſt after her? and are there not ſome that ſhame not to go to the Tavern with other mens wives, and thoſe wives are not aſhamed to be ſeen ſo to do, and there to be at unſeaſonable times, and to ſpend whole nights in dauncing and wantonneſſe? Oh, theſe things are too common in the world: ſuch perſons ſhall little conſider the greatneſſe of the ſin of adultery, they will ſay, Can you charge us with adultery? I take not on me ſo to do, yet certainly theſe are foul preſumptions, and a man may almoſt neceſſarily conclude, that the act of adultery followes on theſe things, and howſoever thou mayſt carry the matter cloſely, and blear the eyes of men, yet remember what hath been ſaid, that adultery is a breach of the covenant made in the ſight of God; and know thou, that though thou break covenant with God, yet God will not break his word with thee. He hath ſaid, *Heb. 13. 4.* that whoremongers and adulterers he will judge; and he will certainly judge thee for that ſin of thine, his hand will find thee out, and thou ſhalt find his puniſhing hand on thy name, on thy eſtate, and on thy body in filthy and rotten diſeaſes, and which is more fearful, thou ſhalt find his hand on thy Soul, giving thee up to dulneſſe and deadneſſe of heart. That ſin of thine, thorow the juſt Judgment of God, ſhall make thee incapable of any thing that is truly good; and thou ſhalt go on in the way to perdition, as thou ſhalt hardly get out of that way: woſull experience ſhews this to be true. Some are ſo beſotted with that ſin of adultery, as they go on in it againſt knowledge, againſt conſcience, and againſt all good motions to the contrary. And as the Prophet complained in his time, *Jer. 7. 9, 10, 19.* They commit adultery, and then come and ſtand before the Lord in the publick aſſembly, and ſay, *We are delivered,* and think all is well, though they be guilty of that foul abomination; they are ſo benumbed with that filthy ſin.

Heb. 13. 4.

Jer. 7. 9, 10, 19

Oh then take we notice of the greatneſſe and fearfulneſſe of the ſin of adultery, and learn to avoid it. Now the means that ſerve to that purpoſe, are theſe eſpecially.

Fiſt, get the fear of God into thine heart, learn to fear God in his Word and Commandements forbidding that ſin, that will purge thine heart from filthy luſts. Marriage is a means to avoid the act of filthineſſe, yet will it not kill luſt where the fear of God is wanting; that hath the promiſe, *Eccleſ. 7. 28.* *I find more bitter then death, the woman whoſe heart is as nets and ſnares, and her hands as bands. He that is good before God, ſhall be delivered from her, but the ſinner ſhall be taken by her.*

1.

Means to avoid the ſin of Adultery. *Eccleſ. 7. 28.*

Secondly, labour to have thy heart poſſeſſed with a true delight in the Word and Ordinances of God. That is a ſpeciall means to keep out luſt. *Prov. 2. 10.* *Solomon ſaith, When wiſdome entreath into thine heart, and knowledge delighteth thy ſoul, Then, Verſ. 16. it ſhall deliver thee from the ſtrange woman, even from the ſtranger which ſtattereth with her lips.*

2.

Prov. 2. 10.

Thirdly, earnestly ſeek to God by prayer, that he would purge thine heart from unclean luſts, and give thee ſtrength of grace againſt that ſin.

3.

And laſtly, avoid all things and occasions that ſtirre thee up to ſin, as idleneſſe, exceſſe and curioſity in dyet, or apparel. wanton ſpeech and geſture, lewd company, and ſuch like.

4.

And if thou carefully uſe theſe means, no doubt thou ſhalt find thine heart

purged



purged from filthy lusts, and thou shalt be enabled to avoid that foul and fearful sin of *Adultery*.

Note.

" Now in that the Apostle saith, *she shall be called an Adulteresse*, I might stand to shew that an *Adulterer*, a filthy person, may lawfully be so called; and that a *Drunkard* may be called a drunkard, and one that is openly prophane may bear of it, and may justly be called a prophane person.

From the latter part of the Verse, we may gather the lawfulness of second marriage, that it is lawful for a man (his wife being dead) to marry another, And so of the wife; and to this purpose the Apostle speaks plainly, 1 Cor. 7. 39. and he wills younger widowes to marry, 1 Tim. 5. 14.

#### VERS. 4.

*So ye, my Brethren, are dead also to the Law by the body of Christ, that ye should be unto another, even unto him that is raised up from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*

**I**N this Verse the Apostle makes the assumption of that Argument of his, by which he proves that true Believers are freed from the Law: his Major or first Proposition which is implied in the words of the first Verse, being this, That dead men are not under the Law, but are freed from it in the first words of this Verse, he assumes on this manner:

That true Believers are dead to the Law, directing his speech in particular to the believing Romans, and to other true Believers that were amongst them, whom he stiles by the name of Brethren. *So ye, my Brethren* (saith he) *are dead also to the Law by the body of Christ, &c.* so stands this Verse in relation to the Apostles Argument, as the assumption of it.

1. Now as this Verse hath respect to the two Verses foregoing; it contains the reddition or application of that comparison or similitude the Apostle takes from the Law of Marriage, wherein we have three correspondent parts, three parts answering to the parts of the similitude: as, First, like as a married woman is free from her husband, when her husband is dead; So (saith the Apostle) true Believers are dead to the Law, and by death are freed from the Law, that is in the first words, *So ye, my Brethren, are dead also to the Law*. To which the Apostle subjoynes how true Believers are dead to the Law, namely, *by the body of Christ*.
2. Then as a wife may lawfully marry another man, when her husband is dead; so here the Apostle saith, True Believers may marry another, which he sets down as the end of the former, That true Believers are dead to the Law, that they should be to another, *that ye should be unto another*. And then he describes that other, That he is one raised from the dead, in the words following, *Even unto him that is raised from the dead*. Then followes the last correspondency, *That as a wife, her husband being dead, and she being married to another man, may bear children to that other man*. (which is not expressed, but implied in the former similitude) so true Believers being freed from the Law and married to another husband, may bring forth fruit unto that husband, and that is also set down as the end of their being married to another husband, in the rest of the words of this verse; *That we should bring forth fruit unto God*: and thus we see what part of the Apostles argument this Verse containes, and how it answers to the foregoing similitude; and so we have the general matter of it.
3. Come we to the several parts of this Verse.

The first part of it, answers to the first part of the foregoing similitude, and is (as ye have heard) in these words; *So ye, my Brethren, are dead to the Law by the body of Christ*.

Interpretation.

*So ye, my Brethren*] Or, wherefore my Brethren; or, now my Brethren; the Apostle useth these words onely as a passage to the application of his foregoing similitude,



similitude; and where he saith, *my Brethren*, his meaning is (as if he had said,) my beloved, whom I respect as those that profess the same truth with me, and are knit to me by the bond of love: *Are dead also to the Law*; this phrase and form of speech, *dead to the Law*, is afterward expounded, *Vers. 6.* where the Apostle saith, *We are delivered from the Law, being dead unto it*: whence we may gather, that to be dead to the Law, is to be freed from it by death; to be set free from the Law, as a wife is set free from the Law of Marriage, by the death of her husband.

Now, this freedom from the Law (understanding by the Law, the moral Law) is not to be conceived as a freedom from all obedience to the Law, as an exemption from the Law, as it is the rule of good life. *Adam* before his Fall was not so freed from the Law; and the Angels and Saints in Heaven are not now freed from it in that respect, none yield more obedience to the Law than they; but we are to conceive this freedom from the Law to be in three other respects; namely, In respect of the rigour of the Law; Of the curse of the Law; And of the power of it to stir up to sin through the corruption of nature.

*By the Body of Christ.*] To omit the divers acceptions of these words, *The body of Christ*, some expounding them of the accomplishment of the figures of the Law; some of the Incarnation of Christ, &c. we are therefore to understand the Passion of Christ, the suffering of Christ in his humane nature, for so was Christ offered up in sacrifice, *Heb. 10. 10.* *By the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once made.* 1 *Pet. 2. 24.* The Apostle saith, *He bare our sins in his body on the Tree.* So then, true Believers are dead to the Law by the body of Christ, that is, by the death and passion of Christ, by his suffering in his humane nature, when he in his humane nature was made a curse for them, to redeem them from the curse of the Law, *Gal. 3. 13.* Thus then conceive we the meaning of the Apostle in these words: *Saye, my Brethren, &c.* As if he had said;

*Heb. 10. 10.*  
*1 Pet. 2. 24.*

*Now then, my beloved in the Lord, whom I respect as those that profess the same truth with me, and are knit to me by the bond of love: As a wife is set free from the Law of Marriage by the death of her husband, so it is with you; you in like manner are set free by death from the rigour and curse of the Law, and from the power it hath to stir you up to sin, even by the death and passion of Christ, by his suffering in his humane nature, when he was made a curse for you, to redeem you from the curse of the Law.*

*Gal. 3. 13.*

Passing by that kind compellation here used by the Apostle (*Brethren*) having stood on that, *Vers. 1.*

In the first place observe we how the Apostle doth here apply his foregoing similitude, namely thus; Having said that a wife is freed by the death of her husband from the Law of Marriage, here he saith, That so it is with the true believing Romanes, and other true Believers amongst them, that they in like manner are freed by death from the Law, even from the rigour and curse of the Law. Hence we are given to understand thus much;

*Observe.*

That true Believers are as free from the Law, not from obedience of the Law, but from the rigour and curse of it, as a wife is free from her husband, when her husband is dead: true Believers are no more under the rigour and curse of the Law, then a wife is under the power of the special Law of Marriage, when her husband is dead. Further proof of this we have, *Gal. 3. 13.* The Apostle saith there, That Christ hath redeemed Gods chosen, as many as truly believe in him, and set them free from the curse of the Law; and *Gal. 4. 4.* he saith, *That Christ became subject to the Law, that he might redeem them that were under the Law*, that is, under the bondage and curse of it, that he might set them free from that bondage and curse of the Law; and therefore certainly, true Believers are as free from the rigour and curse of the Law, as a wife is free from her husband, when her husband is dead, and they are no more under the rigour and curse of the Law, then a wife is under the power of her husband;

*Doctrine 1.*  
True Believers are as free from the rigour and curse of the Law, as a wife is free from her husband, when he is dead.



husband, when her husband is dead : and the reason of this is,

*Reason.*

True Believers are freed from the Justice of God, binding to the rigour and curse of the Law, it being fully answered and satisfied by the death of Christ for them, and on their behalf, as a wife is freed from the special Law of God touching Marriage, when her husband is dead. For the Use.

*Use 1.*

A Popish Error discovered-

First, This discovereth to us the error of the Papists, in that they teach that the Law and the Gospel, are all one for substance of doctrine ; that cannot be, for then true believers, such as are in Christ, should not onely be freed from the Law, but also from the Gospel. Now that we find not in any place of Scripture, that true Believers are freed from the Gospel ; and therefore that is but a Fancy of the Papists, that the Law and Gospel are all one for substance.

*Use 2.*

Comfort for all true Believers.

Secondly, Is it so, that true Believers are as free from the rigour and curse of the Law, as a wife is free from her husband, when her husband is dead ; here is then a ground of sweet comfort for all true believers, this may cheer up their hearts in regard of their many weakneses and imperfections, in doing of good duties, and in avoiding of evil, they find that they fail in doing good things, and come short of that they ought to do, and that they cast not off all evill fully as they desire ; let them herein comfort themselves, that they are freed from the rigour of the Law, and therefore the Lord will not examine their actions according to the strict Rule of his Law, they carrying in their hearts an holy purpose to please God in all things, and walking before him in truth and sincerity, their weakneses, their imperfections, and their failings, besides their purpose, shall never be laid to their charge ; that is an excellent comfort. Men commonly please themselves much in this, that they so carry themselves amongst men, that howsoever they fail, yet the Law of man can take no hold of them, the law of man cannot touch them : much more then may true believers comfort themselves in this, that though they fail in many things, yet the Law of God, in regard of the rigour of it, is as a dead letter to them, it lyes not against them, they are as free from the rigour of it, as a wife is free from her husband, when her husband is dead.

Again, this being so, that true believers are as free from the curse of the Law, as a wife is from her husband when he is dead ; it may teach as many as truly believe in Christ, not to fear any evil over-much, as revilings and cursings of ill tongues, witch-craft, plague, pestilence, famine, sword, or death it self : For why ? the curse which makes all these things hurtful is removed from them that are in Christ : and therefore let not them fear these things before they come, nor be discouraged when they fall on them : What though thou be taken away by a common calamity, as by dearth, by pestilence, by sword, or the like ? yet remember this, if thou be in Christ, the venome and sting of those things is removed from thee, and they fall not on thee as a curse, and let that be thy comfort, and cheer up thine heart.

*Observ.*

Now further, whereas the Apostle adds (*By the body of Christ*, that true Believers are dead to the Law) (*by the body of Christ*) that is, by the death and passion of Christ, we are given to understand thus much,

*Doctrine 2.*

Onely by the death of Christ is the rigour and curse of the Law removed from true Believers, Col. 2. 14. Heb. 7. 22. Gal. 3. 13.

That Christ his death, his suffering, and shedding of his blood on the Crosse, is the only means and meritorious cause of the removing of the rigour and curse of the Law of Gods chosen : onely by the death of Christ is the rigour and curse of the Law removed and taken away from true believers. The Apostle saith, *Coloss. 2. 14.* That Christ putting out the hand-writing of Ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, he even took it out of the way, and fastned it upon the Crosse. And indeed Christ on the Crosse, stood in the stead of Gods chosen, He was their surety, *Heb. 7. 22.* and when he stood on the Crosse, then onely did he undergo the curse for them, *Gal. 3. 13.* The Apostle saith, Christ redeemed them from the curse, when he was made a curse for them : and when was that ? Surely, when he hung on the Crosse : for so it followes in the proof of the Apostle in the words following, For it is written, *Cursed is every one that*

Deut. 21. 23.



that *hangeth on a tree*, which is a plain proof of this, That only by the death of Christ is the rigour and curse of the Law removed from true Believers. We shall never find in any place of Scripture, that remission of sins and removal of the curse of the Law, is ascribed to Christ his active obedience, but ever to his death and passion.

Oh then the intolerable pride of the Papists! they dare challenge remission of sins for something done by themselves, yea for things done by them, for which they have no warrant in the Word of God; as, they dare challenge pardon of sins for their Pilgrimages, wilful Poverty, single Life, and such like; and herein appears their monstrous pride. Jesus Christ the righteous did not purchase remission of sins, and removal of the curse of the Law, by his perfect fulfilling of the Law, and yet the proud Papist dare challenge remission of sins, and removal of the curse of the Law, for his will-worship and devised obedience, which is most hateful and most abominable pride and presumption. To leave them: for the use of the point to our selves.

It being so, that only by the death of Christ, the curse of the Law is removed from true believers: Hence we learn whither to go to find deliverance, from the venome and sting of any trouble or distresse that befalls us, namely to the Crosse of Jesus Christ, when thou art sick, or in any trouble whatsoever; if thou desire to have the bitterness and curse of that trouble removed, then seek thou to the Crosse of Christ.

How is this to be done, may some say?

I answer, The first thing that thou doest in time of thy distresse, let it be this, even an earnest suit put up to God for the pardon of thy sins in the blood of Jesus Christ; seek to the Crosse of Christ for the remission of thy sins, and especially for that sin thou thinkest is the cause of thy trouble, and never rest suing to the Lord, till it please him to give thee some assurance of the pardon of thy sins; and then thou shalt be sure, though thy trouble be still continued on thee, yet the venome and bitterness of that trouble is removed from thee, and it shall not hurt thee: and unless thou take this course, thou canst find no comfort in the time of thy trouble, and though thou beest delivered from thy trouble, yet will it be but in judgment, not in mercy; as it was with *Pharaoh*, so shall it be with thee; one trouble shall follow after another, till thou be destroyed. Learn then in the time of thy distresse to go to the Crosse of Jesus Christ for ease and comfort, and never rest till thou find ease and comfort derived to thee from thence, and thou shalt be sure, whether it be continuance of thy distresse, or deliverance from it, it will be in mercy, not in judgment.

There is yet some further use to be made of this doctrine, that only by the death of Christ, the curse of the Law is removed and taken away from true Believers. This moreover we must know, that if we look for freedom from the curse of the Law, it must be by having part in the death of Christ: if we would be freed from the curse of the Law, we must look that we have our part in the death of Christ; and so far forth as we have part in the death of Christ, so far are we freed from the curse of the Law.

Now we come to have part in the death of Christ by *faith* in his death; by *faith* in Christ crucified, we come to be partakers of the merit of his death, for the taking away of the guilt of sins, and the punishment due to us for our sins: and that we deceive not our selves in this point; for herein every one will be ready to flatter and soothe up himself, and to think he hath *faith* in the blood of Christ, for the washing away of his sins, and thereupon presume to come to the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, wherein *faith* is specially directed to the death and passion of Christ: that we therefore deceive not our selves, Let us know this for a truth, that we can never have true *faith* in the blood of Christ, unless we be further enlightened, then by the light of nature, or then nature can afford, and be made to see the sins of our hearts and lives, yea to see our particular sins: the vilest wretch that lives, can in general say he is a sinner, but

Use 1.

The pride of Papists discovered.

Use 2.

Whither we are to go to find deliverance from the venome and sting of any trouble.

Quest.

Ans.

Use 3.

Such as would be freed from the curse of the Law, must look that they have part in the death of Christ.



Deut. 29. 19.

but our sight of sin must be more special, we must see our particular sins, and we must see them together with the curse and judgments of God attending on them, that we may be humbled for them, and find our selves stand in need of the blood of Christ, for the pardon of them; Many mens hearts and consciences can tell them of their particular sins, and yet they are not humbled for them; and what is the cause? Surely, because they see them not together with the curse of God due to them; they blesse themselves in their hearts and say, they shall have peace, as it is, *Deut. 29. 19.* Men naturally say in their hearts, The curses of the Law are foolishnesse; and deride the Judgments of God threatned against them for their sins.

Oh then, labour thou to see thy particular sins, and to see them together with the curse of God due to them, that so thou mayst be humbled, and find thy self stand in need of the blood of Christ; this is to make way for Faith, and to make thine heart ready and fit for the work of Faith. And if thine heart be thus prepared and humbled, no doubt, the Lord will then work Faith in thee, to apprehend the merit of Christ his death for the pardon of thy sins, and thou shalt be freed from the curse of the Law, and then thou coming to the Sacrament, shalt find thy Faith strengthened and confirmed in the blood of Christ: And the Sacrament shall be to thee a seal of that righteousness that is by faith in Jesus Christ.

One thing yet remains to be gathered from these words of the Apostle; In that he saith, True Believers are dead to the Law, that is, freed not only from the rigour and curse of the Law, but also from the power of the Law, even that power it hath to stirre them up to sin through their own corruption, and that by the *body*, that is, by the death of Christ. Hence we may further gather thus much;

*Doctrine 3.*  
Onely part in  
Christ his  
death sets men  
free from the  
power the Law  
hath to stirre  
them up to sin,  
by reason of  
their own cor-  
ruption.

That it is only part in the death of Christ that sets us free from the power of the Law, even from the power it hath to stirre us up to sin through our own corruption, the Law hath power to stirre up to sin through our corruption, as afterward we shall see, and we are freed from that power, by having part in the death of Christ; yea by having part in the death of Christ, we are enabled to withstand and to repel the temptations of Satan, and to overcome them. For why? *Christ by his death hath destroyed the Devil, Heb. 2. 14. And hath spoiled Principalities and Powers,* and stripped them of their power, *Coloss. 2. 15.* And therefore from the death of Christ, we shall have power against the allurements and provocations of Satan stirring us up to sin; and indeed, as many as truly believe in Christ are made partakers, not only of the merit of Christ his death, but also of the power of it, and by that power, the strength of their own corruption is weakned and abated, and they are thereby enabled to withstand the force of it; and so we may resolve on this as a certain truth, that having part in the death of Christ, is that, that sets us free from that power the Law hath to stirre us up to sin through our own corruption, yea, it makes us able to withstand the temptations of Satan, and to overcome them.

*Use.*  
How we may  
get strength  
against our  
own corrupti-  
on, and against  
Satan's tempta-  
tions.

Hence then learn we how we may get strength against the corruption of our own hearts, and may be enabled to overcome the temptations of Satan alluring and stirring us up to sin; it must be by Faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. Christ by his death hath freed as many as truly believe in him, from the power of the Law, stirring them up to sin through their own corruption, and from his death must we fetch power against the strength of our own corruption, and Christ by his death hath overcome Satan, and stripped him of his power, and thence must we derive power to withstand his temptations, and to overcome them; and if we would be armed to get victory over the Devil, it must be by *faith* in the death of Christ. And hence it is, (no doubt) that most men are easily foyled, and do soon yeeld to the least allurements and temptations of Satan, he tempting and stirring them up to sin, because they want faith in the blood of Christ.



Ye shall hear a man or a woman sometimes say, Oh, I would fain leave this or that sin, I would fain leave my Swearing, I would fain put away my rash Anger, and the like; but alas, I am such a weak and forgetful creature, that I cannot do it. Dost thou whosoever thou art, speak in good earnest; wouldst thou indeed leave thy sin, and of weak be made strong to overcome it? Learn then how thou mayest be so, from the mouth of the holy Ghost, he hath taught thee, *Heb. 11. 34.* By faith in *Christ*, of weak, thou mayest be made strong. They are the very words of the holy Ghost in that place. And, *1. Joh. 5. 4.* *This is our victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* By faith in *Christ*, we shall be able to overcome the World, yea the Prince of this world, the Devil, and to withstand his temptations. Labour then to get faith in the death of *Christ*, and thou shalt thence derive not onely comfort, but strength against thine own corruption, and against Satan sitting thee up to sin: and know it for a truth, that though thou beest one of Gods chosen, and one that doest belong to Gods election, and *Christ* by his death hath taken away the power of the Devil, yet to thee it is not effectual, till thou come to have faith in his death; Till then, the Devil hath power to tempt thee, and to overcome thee: and therefore never rest till thou finde that thou hast faith in the blood of *Christ*, and assurance that thy sins are washed away in his blood, and then thou shalt be sure to finde strength against Sin, Satan, and all the enemies of thy salvation.

Come we to the second part of this Verse, in the next words, *That ye should be to another, even unto him that is raised up from the dead.* These words are easie to be understood, I need not much to stand on the opening of them. *That ye should be to another*, that is, as the new Translation hath, *That ye should be married to another, even unto him*, that is, unto *Christ*; whom the Apostle thus describes, *That he is raised up from the dead*, which is as if he had said, who in his body was dead, but now raised up from death to life again.

Interpretation on.

Observ.

Now here observe we, that the Apostle saith, True believers are dead to the Law, are freed from the Law, as their former husband, not that they should live as it were in widowhood; but that they should be to another, that they should be married to another husband: hence then it is clear,

Doctrine 4.

True believers are in special manner under *Christ* his government and guidance. *Ephes. 1. 22.*

That true Believers are altogether at liberty, though they be freed from the Law; no, they are still under a Governour, under an Head, and under a Guide; yea, they are in special manner under an head and a guide, as a wife is under the government and guidance of her husband: so are they under the government and guidance of *Christ* their husband, and he is in special manner a guide to them, he guides them by his Word, and by his Spirit in special manner, *Ephes. 1. 23.* The Apostle saith, that all things whatsoever are in subjection, and are made subject to *Christ*. But how? under his feet, that is the manner of their subjection: but his Church and the members of it, they are subject to him after a more special manner, namely as the body is subject to the head, and hath made all things subject under his feet, and hath appointed him over all things to be the head to the Church. And, *Ephes. 5. 23, 24.* saith the Apostle, *The husband is the Wives head, even as Christ is the head of the Church.* And therefore as the Church is in subjection to *Christ*, even so let wives be to their husbands in every thing. A plain Text to this purpose, directly shewing that the Church and the members of it, all true believers, though they be from the Law, yet they are not altogether at liberty, but they are still under a government, they are under an head and a guide; as a wife is under the government of her husband, so are they under the special government of *Christ*, and he guides them by his Word and Spirit in special manner; and the reason and ground of this Truth, is this:

*Ephes. 5. 23, 24.*

*Christ* having vouchsafed to joyn true believers so neerly to himself, as to make them flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, without question he bears

Reason.



bears a special love to them, and he hath a special care over them for their good, and out of that love and care of his, he suffers them not to range after the vanities of the world, and after the pleasures of sin, and to run after the lusts of their own hearts; but he orders them, and he guides them after a special manner: and therefore this we may resolve on as a certain truth,

That howsoever true believers are freed from the Law, yet they are not altogether at liberty, they are still under a guide; and as a wife is under the government of her husband, so are they under the special government of *Christ*, and he guides them by his Word and by his Spirit in special manner.

*Use.*  
Tryal who be  
true believers.

Let this be thought on as a ground of tryal to every one of us; hereby try thy self, whether thou be a true believer, and consequently freed from the rigor and curse of the Law, or no: Dost thou finde, that though thou art freed from the rigour and curse of the Law, yet thou art not altogether at liberty, but thou art still under a guide, even under *Christ* thine head, and thou art guided by his Word and Spirit in special manner, thou findest his Word and Spirit guiding thee in all thy thoughts, words, and actions? Then comfort thy self, thou art then a true believer, and thou art freed from the rigour and curse of the Law. But on the other side, if thou find it thus with thee, that thou thinkest thou art freed by *Christ* from the curse of the Law, and yet thou findest not thy self under the government of *Christ*, and that in special manner thou art guided by his Word and Spirit: Deceive not thy self, thou art not freed from the Law, thou art yet under the curse of the Law, and thou art lyable to it in this life, and for ever after this life is ended. And herein thou sands deceive themselves; many think, and they stick not to speak it, that *Christ* dyed for them, and they are redeemed by the blood of *Christ*, and so set free from the curse of the Law, yet they are so far from finding themselves under the special government of *Christ*, as indeed they turn Gods grace into wantonnesse, and the doctrine of grace and of freedom, from the rigour and curse of the Law, into a pernicious indulgence, and licence to sin; and thereupon they take liberty to themselves to go on in all manner of prophanenesse; and a man may read impiety and prophanenesse in their faces, in their fore-tops and new-fangled attyre, and their mouthes utter it forth in cursings, in raylings, and in blasphemous oathes, and they are openly profane in their lives. Oh, such persons exceedingly deceive themselves, & they are marvellously blinded by the devil.

If thou wouldest be sure that thou art a true Believer, and that thou art freed from the rigour and curse of the Law, thou must find thy self under the government of *Christ*, and that thou art guided by his Word and Spirit, in special manner: and if thou finde it not thus with thee, certainly thou art not freed from the Law, thou art under the curse of the Law; and take this for a certain truth, that true Believers find themselves under *Christ* as their head and guide, and that they are guided by him in a special manner, and such as have *Christ* their head and guide in this life, shall have him their Judge and Condemner in the life to come.

*Observe.*

In the next place, we are to observe, who it is that the Apostle saith, the true believing *Romans* and other true Believers should be married unto; and that is exprest in these words (*even to him.*) He saith, the true believing *Romans* and other true believers, were freed from the Law their former husband, that they should be unto another, even to him that is raised up from the dead (that is) unto *Christ*. Hence we are given to understand thus much.

*Doctrine 5.*  
Christ is the  
head and hus-  
band of true  
Believers.  
Hosea 2, 19.

That *Christ* is the husband of the Church; true Believers are married to *Christ*, and *Christ* is their head and their husband, and there is that relation and that neer union and conjunction between *Christ* and the Church, that there is between the husband and the wife. *Hof. 2, 19, 20.* The Lord saith to his Church, *I will marry thee unto me for ever: yea, I will marry thee unto me in righteounesse, and in judgement, and in mercy, and in compassion. 20. I will even marry thee un-*



to me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord. *John 3.* We read, that when *Johns* Disciples came to him, and told him that Christ baptized, and that all men came to him, thinking that, that was a great disparagement to their Master, *John* saith to them, *Vers. 28.* *Ye yourselves are my witnesses, that I said I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.* And then he subjoynes *Vers. 29.* *He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom.* As if he had said, think ye not much at this, that Christ should be preferred before me, and have the chief preeminence in the Church; he is the Bridegroom, and the Church is his Bride; and therefore good reason he should excel and be preferred before all others in the Church.

And this Epithet and Title of being Bridegroom of the Church, is given to Christ, and he takes it to himself, *Matth. 9. 15.* *Can the children of the marriage Chamber mourn, as long as the Bridegroom is with them?* And *Mat. 25. 5.* *Now while the Bridegroom tarried long.* *Vers. 6. 10.* and *Luke 5. 34.* *Can ye make the children of the wedding Chamber to fast, as long as the Bridegroom is with them?* And *Ephes. 5. 30.* The Apostle speaking of the neer spiritual union that is betwixt Christ and his Church, saith, *We are members of his body, and of his flesh, and of his bones:* and, *For this cause shall a man leave Father and Mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh.* And then he adds *Vers. 32.* *This is a great secret, but I speak concerning Christ, and concerning the Church.* Plainly shewing this to be a truth, that there is that relation between Christ and his Church, that there is between the husband and the wife, and that neer union and conjunction between him and his Church, or rather indeed a more neer and more strict union and agreement between him and his Church, then there is between a man and his wife: and to this purpose we might many more testimonies of Scripture: the whole Book of the *Canticles* drives to this purpose, and shewes this to be a truth, that Christ is the husband of the Church, and true Believers are married to Christ, and he is their head and their husband: and the ground of this truth is this.

There is the same nearness between Christ and the Church, that there was between Adam and Eva; for as Eva was framed and made of the rib that was taken out of Adams side, *Gen. 2. 22.* So the Church is framed and made of the issuing and streaming out of the side of Christ crucified; out of the side of Christ crucified came blood and water, *John 19. 34.* by which the Church and the members of it are washed from their sins, and cleansed and made new creatures, even flesh of the flesh of Christ and bone of his bone: and so there being that nearness between Christ and the Church, there is the same relation between them that there was between Adam and Eva, and as Adam was the husband of Eva, so is Christ the husband of the Church, and true Believers are married to Christ, and he is their head and their husband. Now before we come to make use of this, a question is to be answered: for haply some may desire to be further informed touching this point, and may demand,

How Christ comes to be the husband of the Church?

To this I answer, That as it is in the matter of marriage between man and woman, so it is in the spiritual marriage between Christ and the Church: as man and woman come to be husband and wife, by the consent of Parents, and by their own mutual consent, they willingly and freely consenting to become man and wife together; so is it between Christ and the Church; there is in the spiritual Marriage between Christ and the Church, the consent of God the Father, he freely gives Christ his Son to his Church. *Isa. 9. 6.* *Unto us a child is born, and unto us a Son is given.* *Rom. 8. 32.* *Who spared not his own Son, but gave him for us all,* saith the Apostle. And

Again, God gives the Church to Christ, as Christ himself saith, *Joh. 17. 2.* *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to all them that thou hast given him.* And there is also a mutual consent between Christ and the Church; God works Faith in the hearts of his chosen, by which they

Joh. 3. 28.

29.

Matth. 9. 15.

Matth. 25. 5.

6. 10.

Ephes. 5. 30.

31.

32.

Reason.

Object.

Answer.

Isa. 9. 6.

Rom. 8. 32.

Joh. 17. 2.



Joh. 6. 37.

acknowledg *Christ*, imbrace *Christ*, and receive him, and subject themselves to him, and *Christ* cannot but will, that which his Father wills; and so he on the other side consents, and taketh the Church for his Spouse; and to this purpose we have a plain Text, *Joh. 6. 37. All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh, I cast not away.*

In that Text we may observe a threefold consent; (*All that the Father giveth me*) there is the consent of the Father, (*shall come*) there is the consent of the Church, (*And him that cometh to me, I cast not away*) there is the consent of *Christ*. And by this threefold consent is the Spiritual Marriage made between *Christ* and the Church: and so we see how *Christ* comes to be the husband of the Church, namely thus; God the father freely gives *Christ* to the Church, and the Church to *Christ*; The Church, and the members of it, by faith wrought in them, receive *Christ*, and subject themselves to him, and *Christ* willing the same thing that his Father doth, consents and takes the Church for his Spouse: and so all true believers are married to *Christ*, and He is their head and husband, and there is that relation and that near union between *Christ* and the Church, that there is between the husband and the wife.

Use 1.

True believers may be assured, that *Christ* and all his benefits and merits are theirs.

Now this may in the first place serve to strengthen the faith of all true believers, touching their interest and title to *Christ*, and to all his saving graces, for why? *Christ* is their husband, and hath given himself to them, and therefore they may undoubtedly assure themselves, that all his graces, benefits and merits are theirs, and do truly belong to them; and it is not, as the Papists say, a fancy of an idle brain, that the righteousness of *Christ* and his merits are made ours, we truly believing in *Christ*: the Papists say it is a fancy, and all one as if we should say, One man lives by the soul of another. It is not so; *Christ* being our *Christ*, and he being our head and husband, we may build on it, and we may be sure that all his graces, benefits and merits are truly ours, and do truly belong to us.

Use 2.

And they may be assured of *Christ* his love towards them, and of his care over them for their good.

Again is it so, that there is that relation, and that near union between *Christ* and the Church, that there is between the husband and the wife? Surely then, as many as truly believe in *Christ*, on this ground may assure themselves of the love of *Christ* towards them, and of his care over them for their good, and that he will certainly protect them against all that seek to violence them, and to wrong them any way. A kind and loving husband will not suffer his wife to be wronged, if he be able to right it; nay, his love is so strong, as he will rather suffer and sustain wrong himself, then he will suffer his wife to be wronged, if he be able to right it: much lesse will *Christ Jesus* suffer his Church, or any member of it to be wronged; his love to his Church far surpasseth the love of the kindest husband in the world to his wife; there is no comparison between them, and he is most able to defend his Church and the members of it, he being God of infinite power, and all power being given to him, both in Heaven and in Earth, *Matth. 28. 18.* And though he do suffer thee sometimes to be wronged, for causes best known to himself, yet be thou sure of this, thou that art a true believer, thou mayest go to him boldly, and powre out thy complaint into his bosom, and he will hear it, and take notice of thy wrong, and he will uphold thee, that thou faint not under it altogether, and he will one day pay them home that do wrong thee, when he comes to put on his garment dyed in blood, *Revel. 19. 13.* Woe be them that have wronged the least and poorest member of his Church; yea, take this with thee for thy farther comfort, thou that art a true Believer, thou that hast *Christ* thine head and husband, and he is such an head & husband, as he is able to take notice, and doth take notice of the wrongs that are onely intended against thee, even of the secret mischief that the wicked instruments of the devil do plot and devise against thee in the depth of their hearts, he being not onely man, but God also, he is able to take notice of them: full little do the wicked Imps of the Devil, such as with ill to Sion and to the members of the Church, think on this; they think if they can cover their malice, and though they carry

Matth. 28. 18.

Revel. 19. 13.



carry in their breſts cankered hearts, hearts full of rancor and miſchief intended againſt Gods children, waiting for an opportunity to practiſe it, yet if they can ſmooth it over with a fair countenance, all is well. Alasſe poor ſouls, they deceive themſelves; true believers have an head, an huſband, that is able, and doth take notice of that miſchief, that is onely hatched and conceived in the brain againſt them, and his love to them is ſo ſtrong, as he will not ſuffer that to go unpuniſhed, but will one day plague thee for thy purpoſe of evil againſt any of his, though it never break out into action. An excellent comfort to all true Believers.

Now further on this ground, that there is that relation and that neer union between Chriſt and the Church, that there is between the huſband and the wife, true Believers muſt learn their duty, hereupon they muſt learn to love Chriſt as their huſband, they muſt give to him the chief affection of their hearts; their love, their joy, their delight, and they muſt yield their bodies and ſoules wholly to him.

*Uſe. 3.*  
The duty of true Believers towards Chriſt their head and Huſband.

Doeſt thou perſwade thy ſelf that Chriſt is thine huſband? Oh let him have the chief love of thine heart. Herein many in the world are exceeding faulty, they think they have Chriſt their head and huſband, and yet the chief love of their hearts is not given to him; no, no, they ſet their love and delight chiefly on the World and the things of it, on the profits, pleaſures, and vanities of the World, and will not be driven from the love and liking of thoſe things.

Doeſt thou perſwade thy ſelf, thou that art a covetous worldling, or thou that art a ſenſual perſon, that Chriſt is thine huſband? Certainly then thou art no better then a Strumpet, and a filthy Whore. Some think they put off the matter handſomely, when being juſtly reprov'd for their worldlineſſe; for their garishneſſe in apparel or the like, they can ſay to the Reprover, what need you to be ſo hot? why? I hope I am neither whore nor Thief. But in deed and truth they are both; they ſteal away their hearts from Chriſt, to whom they belong (as they think) and they go a whoring after the profits and pleaſures of the world. The Holy Ghoſt hath taught me thus to ſpeak; mark what James ſaith, *Jam. 4. 4. Ye Adulterers and Adultereſſes, know ye not, that the amity of the World is Enmity to God?* Whoſoever therefore will be a friend of the World maketh himſelf the enemy of God.

*Jam. 4. 4.*

If thou that makeſt profeſſion of the faith of Chriſt, and thinkeſt that thou art a true Believer, doeſt beſtow the chief love of thine heart on any thing but on Chriſt, thou goeſt a whoring from Chriſt, and thou art no better then an Adultereſſe and a filthy Strumpet.

Haply thou wilt ſay, How ſhall I know that I give the chief love of mine heart to Chriſt?

*Queſt.*

Thou mayeſt eaſily know it, if thou do but conſider how it is with a wife that truly loves her huſband, A wife that truly loves her huſband, holds him better to her then all the men in the world beſides: yea, as *Elkana* ſaid to *Hannah*, *I Sam. 1. 8.* he was better to her then ten Sons, ſhe delights in him and in his company above all others, and ſhe is never well, or at the leaſt not ſo well as when ſhe is in his company, yea, ſhe delights to ſee the lively Image and reſemblance of her huſband in his children, in his friends and kindred, and ſhe loves them the better, becauſe they are like to her huſband.

*Anſw.*

*I Sam. 1. 8.*

Now thus it is with thee in reſpect of Chriſt, if he have the chief love of thine heart; if Chriſt be he whom thy ſoul chiefly loves, then thou makeſt more account of him then of all riches and treaſures in the world, yea thou holdeſt all things loſſe and dung in reſpect of him, thou delighteſt in his preſence and company; it is the joy of thine heart, and the rejoycing of thy ſoul, to be where thou mayeſt ſee the face and glorious beauty of thy beloved, Jeſus Chriſt, even to come to the houſe of God, to the Word and Sacraments, where Chriſt is ſet before thee in lively manner. *Gal. 3. 1.* yea, thou delighteſt in thoſe that bear

*Gal. 3. 1.*



Phil. 1. 23.

Rev. 22. 17.

bear the Image of Christ, in the Saints and children of God, thou lovest them the better, because they are like to Christ: and thou desirest with the Apostle, *Phil. 1. 23. to be loosed, and to be with Christ*, even fully to enjoy his presence, and thou art able out of the earnest and fervent desire of thine heart, to say with the Bride, *Rev. 22. 17. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

Hereby try thy self; if it be thus with thee, then indeed Christ hath the chief love of thine heart, and thou mayst assure thy self, that thou hast his love, and that he will certainly protect and defend thee against all thine enemies, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against thee.

1 Cor. 16. 22.

But if thou love not the Lord Jesus, then consider what a fearful doom the Apostle hath thundred out against thee, *1 Cor. 16. 22. If any love not the Lord Jesus, let him be had in execration, yea, excommunicate to death.*

Observ.

One thing yet remains to be observed in this second part of the Verse. We are to mark that the Apostle saith not, *That ye should be to another*, even to Christ, in plain terms; though that is his meaning: but he speaks of Christ by way of *Periphrasis*, by way of description, and he sets him out thus, *Even to him that is raised up from the dead*, that is, unto Christ, who in his body was dead, but now is raised up from the dead, and now lives an immortal life, even for ever. Hence we are further given to understand thus much:

*Doctrine.*  
Christ is the  
ever-living  
husband of his  
Church.

That Christ is not onely the husband of the Church, that true believers are married to Christ, but that he is such an husband, as being raised from the dead, ever lives, he is an ever-living husband; true believers are married to Christ, and he is their head and their husband, and he is such an husband as is raised up from the dead, and now lives an immortal life, and shall continue their husband for ever: For why?

Hos. 2. 19.

Jer. 32. 40.

Heb. 7. 25.

As the Apostle saith, *Rom. 6. 9. Christ being raised, he dyeth no more: Death hath no more dominion over him.* Therefore doubtlesse when the Apostle here saith, that the true believing Romans, and other true believers should be married to another, namely, to Christ, and to him raised up from the dead, he intends, and would have us to understand thus much, that Christ is the husband of the Church: yea, that he is an ever-living husband, and that he is such an husband, as being raised from the dead, is no more subject to death, but now lives an immortal life, and shall remain the husband of the Church, and of all true believers for ever: and to this purpose the Text is plain, *Hos. 2. 19. I will marry thee to me* (saith the Lord to his Church) *for ever.* I will be an husband to thee for ever, *Jer. 32. 40.* The Lord said, he would make an everlasting Covenant with his people, and that he would never turn away from them to do them good: as if he had said, Having once entred into covenant with them, and as it were, married them to himself, he would continue to be their husband for ever. *Heb. 7. 25.* The Holy Ghost saith, *He is able perfectly to save them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* *Rev. 1. 18.* saith Christ, *I am alive, but I was dead: and behold, I am alive for evermore.*

These and many other places that might be brought, do make this a clear point, That Christ is not onely the husband of the Church, but he is such an husband as lives for ever, he being raised from the dead, he is no more subject to death, but now lives an immortal life, and shall certainly continue the husband of the Church, and of all true Believers for ever; the reason and ground of this truth is this:

Reason.

Christ being raised from the dead, he lives no more a natural and frail life, a life sustained by natural means; Christ in his Resurrection put away his natural and frail life, or at least, the quality and condition of it, and changed it into an heavenly and spiritual life, into a life without infirmities, and not sustained by food, and the like, as before, and so into a life immortal, and that never can decay: and therefore on this ground we may certainly conclude, that Christ being the husband of the Church, he is an ever-living husband, and shall undoubtedly



doubtedly continue the Husband of the Church, and of all true Believers for ever.

This, in the first place, may serve to discover to us, that, that is an error and a false opinion, held and maintained by some, either Papists or Popishly affected, that true Believers may be quite cut off from the Church, that there may be a separation and a divorce between Christ and some that are true Believers, that a true Believer, one that is now a member of Christ, may hereafter become no member of Christ. That cannot stand with the truth now delivered and proved to us out of the Word of God: For, if Christ be an ever-living husband, if he continue the Husband of the Church, and of all true Believers for ever, it is not possible that there should be a divorce between Christ and any one that truly believes in him, and that any true Believer should ever be quite cut off and separated from Christ: for indeed who is able to make a separation between Christ and any one that truly belongs to him? Surely, not all the power of hell is able to do it. No, no, Christ himself saith, *Joh. 20. 28. That he gives eternal life to those that are his, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hands.*

Use 1.

That Popish error, that true Believers may be divorced from Christ, discovered and confuted.

Joh. 10. 28.

Some object that place, *1 Cor. 6. 15.* where the Apostle saith, *Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the Members of an Harlot? God forbid:* and they think they have ground from thence, that true Believers may be quite separated and divorced from Christ, that a believing member of Christ may become no member of Christ, being made the member of an Harlot.

Object.

1 Cor. 6. 15.

But indeed they pervert the purpose of the Apostle, and they misconster his meaning; for the Apostles purpose in that place is not (no, not so much as by implication) to signify, that any true Believer may be wholly separated and divorced from Christ, but his purpose there is to set out the hainousnesse, and ugliness of the sin of Adultery and Fornication, and that it were a most foul, unseemly, vile, and monstrous thing, that any that make profession of the truth of Christ, and hold themselves to be members of Christ, should so forget themselves, and their own excellent condition, as to prostitute and abase their bodies, that are members of Christ, and joyn them with an Harlot, and make them one body with an Harlot; that were a most vile thing.

Answer.

And that, that is the purpose of the Apostle, appears plainly by his words, *Know ye not* (saith he) *that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an Harlot? God forbid.* As if he had said? Fie on it, far be it from every one of you that hold yourselves to be members of Christ, that you should so abase your bodies, as to make them members of an Harlot. So that place makes nothing for the upholding of that error, That a true Believer may be quite separated and divorced from Christ. For a second Use of the point:

Is it so, that Christ being the Husband of the Church, is an ever-living Husband, and continues the husband of the Church and of all true Believers for ever? Then here is a ground of sweet and of excellent comfort for all that truly believe in Jesus Christ; hereupon they may cheer up their hearts, and they may comfort themselves in their greatest troubles and distresses: for what though their troubles be great, and lye heavy upon them? yet there is no trouble, no affliction, no distresse whatsoever that can make a separation and a divorce between them and Christ their Head and Husband; he still continues their Head, and he is still their Husband, even when they are plunged into their deepest distresse: and that may be a great comfort to them.

Use 2.

Comfort for true Believers in their greatest troubles and distresses

We know it is a comfort to a wife in the time of some great losse, that her husband is yet living, though her goods be taken away and lost by fire, by water, or the like; though she have lost her children, and her dearest and her nearest friends are taken away from her, yet this is a stay to her fainting heart, and this cheares her up, that her kind and loving husband is yet alive, and she hath him still with her; for she is sure that he will bear part with her, in her distresse and



and trouble, and that he will be a guide and comfort, and an help to her in any thing for her good, so far as he is able. This she is sure of, and this comforts her. Oh much more may true Believers comfort themselves, and cheer up their hearts in their greatest troubles, crosses and losses whatsoever they be. I say, much more may they comfort themselves with this; that their head and husband Christ Jesus is yet alive; for he is an husband all-sufficient, able to succour, help and comfort them, and they may be sure that he will relieve and comfort them, yea, that he will even bear part with them in their troubles: They may assure themselves of this, there is not any affliction they suffer, but Jesus Christ their head and husband bears part with them, and he suffers with them.

Oh then, think on this in thy greatest affliction, thou that art a true Believer; what though it be so, that thou hast lost thy goods, thy outward liberty, thy wife, thy children, thy dearest friends; yea, thou being a wife, hast lost a kind, a loving, and dear husband? Yet remember this to thy comfort, there is no losse, no affliction, that can turn away Gods love from thee, and make a divorce between thee and Christ Jesus thine head and husband: No, no, he is an ever-living husband, he is still thine husband, and shall so continue for ever. Yea, remember yet further to thy comfort, thou that art a true Believer, though thy affliction be so great, as that thy very life is taken away from thee, yet there is no divorce made between thee and Christ Jesus: Death may separate thy body and soul asunder, but it cannot divide thee from thy God, and make a divorce between thee and Christ Jesus thine Head and Husband: No, no, he is still thine, and thou art still his. *Rom. 14. 8. Whether we live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we dye, we dye unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or dye, we are the Lords.* Death which is the King of fear to the wicked, it joyns thee nearer to Christ thine Husband; and though thy body be severed from thy soul, and laid up in the earth, yet it shall be so but for a time, and in the mean time it is not divided from the Lord Jesus; No, no, though thy body rot, and be turned into dust in the grave, yet that very dust is within the covenant, and knit to Christ Jesus, and thou art still his both in body and soul, and he is still thine head and husband; and that is an excellent comfort: and let all true Believers lay it up in their hearts, and let none but true Believers meddle with it, it belongs not to any other; but thou that art a true Believer, lay up this ground of comfort in thine heart, that Christ is thine head and husband, and shall so continue for ever, and thou shalt find it will comfort thee in thy greatest affliction, yea, when the very pangs of death are upon thee.

Now to the third and last part of this Verse; *That we should bring forth fruit unto God.* We see here, the Apostle saith, the true believing Romanes, and other true Believers should be married to Christ, and to him, raised up from the dead: to this end, or that this might follow on it, that they should bring forth fruit unto God. Hence we may easily gather thus much;

*Doctrine.*

That it is by vertue of Christ his Resurrection, that men are enabled to bring forth fruit to God; when men are married to Christ, and made one with him, even with him raised from the dead, and made partakers of the virtue and power of his Resurrection, then they are quickned, and then they are made able to bring forth good and holy fruits, and till then they are not able to bring forth any fruit to God: and therefore Christ saith, *Joh. 15. 4. Abide in me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of it self, except it abide in the Vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.* Vers. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* And the reason and ground of this truth is this;

*Joh. 15. 4.*

*Vers. 5.*

*Reason.*

*Act. 3. 15.*

*1 Cor. 15. 45.*

Christ is not only the giver of spiritual life and quickning, but he is also the root of it, and from him it comes, and must come; *He is the Lord of life, Act. 3. 15. He is a quickening Spirit, 1 Cor. 15. 45.* and therefore from him it comes, even from the power and virtue of his Resurrection, that men are able to bring forth fruit unto God.

*Use 1.*

Now this first discovers to us the error of the Papists, touching their works of



of Preparation; they ſay, that a man in his meer natural ſtate before his con- Works of Pre-  
 verſion, may do ſome good things, even things truly good and holy, and may paration over-  
 prepare himſelf to receive grace. This is a foul and groſſe error, and it is met thrown.  
 withal by the truth now delivered: For before a man be married to Chriſt, and  
 to him raiſed up from the dead, and ſo quickned by the vertue of his Reſur-  
 rection; he is not able to bring forth any fruit to God.

And again the truth now delivered, makes known to us, that howſoever  
 men in their natural ſtate, may do things good in themſelves, yet they cannot do  
 any thing truly good and holy, they cannot bring forth fruit to God, they may  
 build Hospitals, Colledges, and the like, and do many great works, good in  
 themſelves, but they cannot do any thing truly good and pleaſing to God; and  
 therefore we ſhould never reſt, till we finde our ſelves married to Chriſt, and  
 made one with him, even with him raiſed up from the dead, and made parta-  
 kers of the power and vertue of his Reſurrection, that ſo we may be able to  
 bring forth fruit to God, and may do good duties, pleaſing to God, and com-  
 fortable to our own conſciences.

In this third and laſt part of the Verſe, the Apoſtle ſets down the laſt cor-  
 reſpondency to his foregoing ſimilitude, taken from marriage; and thus it  
 ſtands: That as a wife, her husband being dead, and ſhe being married to ano-  
 ther, may lawfully bear children to that other man: ſo the true believing Ro-  
 mans, and other true believers, being freed from the Law, and married to Chriſt,  
 they may bring forth fruit to him; yea, he ſets it down as a duty, they are bound  
 unto that they are therefore married to Chriſt, and to him raiſed up from the  
 dead, that they ſhould bring forth fruit to him.

(That we) the Apoſtle here changeth the perſon. He ſaid before, *So ye,*  
*my Brethren, are dead alſo to the Law by the body of Chriſt, that ye ſhould be un-* Interpretati-  
*to another.* In the ſecond perſon; but here he ſpeaks in the firſt perſon, and on.  
 ſaith, *That we ſhould bring forth fruit unto God.* His meaning is this, that you  
 and I, and all true believers, both of Jews and Gentiles, whatſoever we be,  
 ſhould bring forth fruit and fructiſe, and as it were, bear and bring forth chil-  
 dren to God, according to the phraſe of the Hebrewes, who call children, The  
 fruit of the wombe, as *Pſal. 127. 3. Behold, children are the inheritance of the*  
*Lord, and the fruit of the wombe, his reward.* *Pſal. 128. 3. Thy wife ſhall be as* *Pſal. 127. 3.*  
*the fruitful Vine on the ſides of thine houſe, and thy children like the Olive plants* *פרי חבש*  
*round about thy table.* Now this phraſe and form of ſpeech here uſed by the *Pſal. 128. 3.*  
 Apoſtle, ſignifieth two things:

First, that we ſhould bring forth both in minde and heart, and alſo in word  
 and deed, ſuch things as are as it were begotten of God, and come from God,  
 and from Chriſt, *who is God over all, bleſſed for ever, Rom. 9. 5.* that we ſhould  
 bring forth holy, heavenly, and divine, and ſpiritual things, ſuch thoughts, ſuch Rom. 9. 5.  
 affections, ſuch words and ſuch deeds, as come from Chriſt, and from the Spi-  
 rit of Chriſt, and have the ſpirit of Chriſt the worker of them, and ſo are cal-  
 led by the Apoſtle, the fruit of the Spirit, *Gal. 5. 22. But the fruit of the Spirit*  
*is love, joy, peace, long ſuffering, gentleneſſe, goodneſſe, faith.* Gal. 5. 22.

Secondly, ſuch things both in heart and life, as are as ſweet fruits to God,  
 even ſuch thoughts, affections, words and works, as are pleaſing to God  
 through Chriſt, and ſuch as he of his mercy will crown with no leſſe then the  
 reward of eternal life and glory, as the holy Ghoſt ſaith, *Heb. 13. 15. that*  
*praiſe and thankſgiving to God, which is the fruits of the lips (for ſo he calls* Heb. 13. 15.  
*it) is a pleaſing ſacrifice to God through Chriſt: And he ſubjoynes, Verſ. 16.*  
*To do good and diſtribute forget not: for with ſuch ſacrifices God is pleaſed.*

Theſe two things then are ſignified and intended by the Apoſtle in this phraſe  
 of bringing forth fruit to God, namely; a bringing forth of ſuch thoughts,  
 affections, words and deeds, as come from God, and are pleaſing to God  
 through Chriſt.

Thus then we are to conceive the Apoſtles meaning in theſe words.

Thus



*That you and I, and all true Believers, both of the Jews and Gentiles, should bring forth such thoughts, such affections, such words and deeds, as are holy, heavenly, divine, and spiritual, and as it were begotten of God, that we should even think, speak, and do such things as come from Christ, and from the Spirit of Christ, and have the Spirit of Christ the worker of them, and are also pleasing to God through Christ, and such as he in his mercy will crown with the reward of eternal life.*

*Observ.*

First here observe we the change of the person. The Apostle having said before: *So ye, my Brethren, are dead also to the Law, by the body of Christ, that ye should be unto another:* Here he saith, that we should bring forth fruit unto God: thereby (no doubt) intimating thus much, that not onely the believing Romans, and other true believers, amongst them who were newly converted and brought to believe in Christ, and as it were newly married to Christ, but that himself and others also that were of longer standing in Christ, and had been longer married to Him, ought to bring forth good and holy fruits both in their hearts and lives: hence note we in a word.

*Doctrine.*

They that have been longest married to Christ must be still child-bearing to Christ.  
Psal. 84. 7.

Psal. 92. 14.

Philip. 1. 9.

11.

That none of those that hold themselves married to Christ, are to think themselves at any time exempted from bringing forth fruit to Christ: even such as are most holy, and most regenerate, and have been longest married to Christ, must still be as it were child-bearing to Christ, and must still bring forth good and holy fruits, yea the longer men are married to Christ, the more fruitful must they be to Him, and the more must they abound in holy, heavenly and divine thoughts and affections, words and actions. *Psal. 84. 7.* it is said of the people of God, that *they go from strength to strength, till every one appear before God in Zion.* And *Psal. 92. 14.* that *such as be planted in the house of God, they flourish, and they still bring forth fruit, yea, in their old age.* And the Apostle thus prayed for the *Philippians, Philip. 1. 9.* that their love might abound more and more. And then *Verse 11.* That they be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus unto the praise and glory of God, (that is) such holy fruits as are brought forth by the power and working of his Spirit; and indeed there is no time, wherein such as are married to Christ, are past child-bearing to Christ, and past bringing forth of fruit to him: it is not with them as it is with women, *Gen. 18. 11.* when they are old and stricken in age, when they are past children: no, no, there is no such time with them that are married to Christ, they are never past fruitfulness and child-bearing to Christ, and therefore they are not to cease to bear and to bring forth fruit to him: but the elder they grow, the more they are to abound in good and holy fruits, the more fruitful are they to be in every good thought and affection, and in every good word and work.

*Use.*  
Reproof of such as grow worse and worse in their old age.

But alas, how far from this are many in the world, that hold themselves such as belong to Christ, and to be married to him! Do they continue, as it were child-bearing to Christ? do they, the elder they grow, the more increase, and the more abound in good and holy fruits? Oh no, many there be, that the more they grow in years, the colder and the more backward they become to every good and holy duty. May we not observe a general decay and declining and going backward in good things? Where is that Zeal, that love to Religion, that earnestness and that forwardness in good things that we have heard of, or known to be in men and women heretofore? Nay be there not some that we can remember, who have been heretofore, or at the least seemed to be forward for in Religion, and zealous in good things, that were wont to be careful to sanctify the Sabbath, to keep good order in their houses, to instruct their families, to use Prayer constantly, that now are not onely not so well affected to Religion, and not so forward in good things as they have been, but are even quite fallen from them, and are now carried away with the sway and with the evil examples of the time.

Well, to them I say no more but this: In a word, let them know that their case



case is fearful, and that I may not only say it, but prove it to them, let them look, 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21, 22. saith the Apostle, *If after they have escaped from the filthinesse of the World, through the knowledge of the Lord, and of the Saviour Jesus Christ, are yet tangled again and therein overcome, the latter end is worse with them then the beginning. For it had been better for them, not to have known the way of righteousness, then after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment given unto them: but it is come unto them according to the true Proverb, The Dogg is returned to his own vomit; and the Sow that was washed, to the wallowing in the mire.* Yea certainly, such as in their old dayes grow cold in good things, and in good duties, and in bringing forth good fruits to God, do give more then a probable sign, and it is more then probable, that they were never married to Christ, and never made one with him. For, is it old age that can hinder his working? No, no; deceive not thy self, if thou be married to Christ, thou shalt find thy self quickened by him, and made able to bring forth fruit to God, yea, to bring forth more and more good and holy fruit in thine old age. And if it be not thus with thee, it is a fearful sign that thou wast never married to Christ.

Now further, in that the Apostle having said, that the true believing Romans, and other true believers, should be married to Christ, and to him raised up from the dead, and he subjoyns to it, that they should bring forth fruit to God, we may easily conclude, and gather thus much,

That the state of a true Believer is no barren state; true Believers are not barren and fruitlesse, but being married to Christ, they are fruitful, and they are, as it were, child-bearing to Christ, and they bring forth good thoughts, affections, words and actions, as children to Christ their Husband, and as fruits to God, it is the end of their being married to Christ, and doubtlesse they make not the end of their marriage frustrate: and hence it is that they are compared to fruit-bearing trees, *Psalm 1. 3.* They are said to be trees planted by the Rivers of waters, which bring forth fruit in their season. Yea, they are said to be so planted, as that in respect of their rooting, they feel not when the heat cometh, the year of drought cannot make them cease yeelding fruit, *Jer. 17. 8.* and *Isa. 61. 3.* *Trees of righteousness: and the planting of the Lord;* and *Cant. 4. 16.* the Church is said to be as a Garden, yeelding pleasant fruit. And to these I might adde many like testimonies, all pointing to this Truth, that true Believers are fruitful, and do bring forth good and holy fruits, and being married to Christ, they are, as it were, child-bearing to Christ, and do bring forth good thoughts, affections, words and actions, as children to Christ. And indeed this cannot be otherwise. The reason and ground of this truth is this;

True Believers being married to Christ, they have spiritual fellowship with Christ, they are made partakers of the Spirit of Christ, and of the life of Christ, even of the spiritual life of grace; and where the Spirit of Christ is, and the life of grace, there cannot but be fruitfulness in all good thoughts, affections, words and actions: and therefore as many as are married to Christ, they are fruitful, and they certainly bring forth good and holy fruits both in mind and heart, and in word and deed.

Now this may serve as a ground of tryal to every one of us, touching our fellowship and communion with Christ Jesus: Doest thou perswade thy self that thou art married to Christ, that he is thine husband, and that thou hast heavenly fellowship with him? Certainly then thou art not barren, but thou art child-bearing to Christ, thou art partaker of the Spirit of Christ, and of the life of Christ, and thou bringest forth good and holy fruits, thy mind is full of good thoughts, thy heart full of holy and heavenly affections, thy mouth full of good and gracious speeches, thy life abounds with good and holy actions of piety, of equity, of justice, of love, and of mercy: and if it be thus with thee, thou mayest with comfort assure thy self, that thou hast Christ to thine husband, and that thou hast sweet and heavenly fellowship with Him.

2 Pet. 2. 20.

21.

22.

Obfer.

Doctrine.

True Believers are not barren and fruitlesse.

Reason.

Use.

Tryal of our fellowship and communion with Christ.

But



But on the other side, if thou find it not thus with thee, but that thou art barren of all good thoughts, affections, words and deeds, and that rather thine head is full of wicked thoughts, thine heart full of wicked lusts, and thy mouth runs over with cursing, swearing and the like, and thy life abounds with many foul and grosse sins; deceive not thy self, if thou think that Christ is thine husband, and that thou hast fellowship with him, it is but a fancy; and if thou say so, thou art no better then a liar, the Holy Ghost hath given thee the lye, *1 Joh. 1. 6. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darknesse, that is, in ignorance and sin, we lye, and do not truly, we deceive our selves.* And herein many deceive themselves. How many be there that are altogether barren of those holy fruits the Apostle reckons up, *Gal. 5. 22, 23. Love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentlenesse, goodnesse, faith, meeknesse, temperance?* Nay, how many be there, that abound with the contrary fruits? Instead of love to God and Men, they abound with contempt of God, of his Word and Ordinances, and with hatred of his Children. In stead of spiritual joy, they abound with carnal joy, rejoycing in sin and in the works of the flesh: and so we might instance in the rest. In stead of temperancy and moderation in meat, drink, apparel, and other outward things, how do many abound in the contrary fruits! they give themselves to surfeiting and drunkenesse, to pride in apparel, never more then in these dayes; yea, the more this sin of pride in apparel is spoken against, the more it abounds. Can such persons perswade themselves that Christ is their husband? If they do, certainly they deceive themselves: Do but in reason consider it; Doeſt thou think Christ is thine Husband, and yet thou bringest forth fruit, not to Him, but to the Devil, and to the lust of thine own heart? Surely, then thou playest the Whore and the filthy Strumpet; and if thou wilt needs say that Christ is thine husband, and thou wilt thrust thy self under his name, and he shall bear thy name, and thou wilt bear the name of a Christian, then know that thou canst look for no comfort by him, or from him, he is a jealous husband, he will one day come and take thee tardy, even playing the Whore with his utter enemy, and then the fire of his wrath and jealousie shall burn thee down to the bottomlesse pit of hell.

If thou wouldst be sure that Christ is thine husband, thou must find thy self child-bearing to him, and that thou bringest forth fruit to him, even good and holy thoughts, affections, words and actions. And if it be thus with thee, then thou hast heavenly fellowship with Christ in this life, and shalt have eternal fellowship with him in the life to come.

*Note.*

Note we further, that good thoughts, affections, words and actions, are called fruits to God, and are as children begotten of God. And,

The consideration of this may be an excellent motive, to stirre us up to have our hearts and minds abounding with good thoughts and affections, and our lives with good words and actions: for why? the Lord is as well pleased with them through Christ, as with his own begotten children; they are as sweet fruits to him, and most pleasing to him in Christ, and he will reward the least good action of ours, coming from the root of a lively faith in Jesus Christ, with no lesse then the reward of eternal life and glory. Come we to the fifth and sixth Verses.

VERS.



## VERS. 5, 6.

*For When we were in the Fleſh, the motions of ſins Which were by the Law, had force in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.*

*But now we are delivered from the Law, being dead unto it, wherein we were holden, that we ſhould ſerve in newneſſe of Spirit, and not in the oldneſſe of the Letter.*



Our Apoſtle having before made known, That the true believing Romanes, and other true Believers, were freed from the Law their former husband, and married to Chriſt, and being married to Chriſt, that they ſhould bring forth fruit to him, that they ſhould be, as it were, child-bearing to Chriſt: In theſe two Verſes he doth farther amplifie that particular of bringing forth fruit to Chriſt, by a comparison *à paribus*, and further ſhewes, that it was meet and fit that himſelf and other true Believers, being married to Chriſt, ſhould bring forth fruit to him: and thus he reaſons, (for the fifth Verſe is inferred as a reaſon on the former) as appears in the word (*For*.) As when we were under the Law, and married to the Law, we brought forth fruit answerable to that condition: So now, being freed from the Law, and married to Chriſt, it is very meet, equal and fit, that we ſhould bring forth fruit to him, in all equity and reaſon we are bound ſo to do, That is the general drift and purpoſe of the Apoſtle in theſe two Verſes.

Now more particularly in Verſ. 5. is laid down the firſt part of the Apoſtles comparison, and that not barely propounded, but ſet forth on this manner:

First, the Apoſtle delivers the ſtate and condition of himſelf, and other true Believers, being under the Law, in theſe termes (*in the fleſh*) He ſaith, *When ye were in the fleſh*; and conſequently, *under the Law, and married to the Law.*

And then he ſaith not barely, that himſelf and other true Believers being in that ſtate, brought forth fruit answerable to it, but he ſets down the cauſe, and diſcovers the root, whence ſuch fruit came, as that it came from the motions of ſins, deſcribing thoſe motions, that they were by the Law. *The motions of ſins Which were by the Law.* And then he makes known the power and working of thoſe motions, together with the ſubject wherein they wrought, as that they had force and working in their members; *had force in our members.*

And laſt of all, how far forth thoſe motions had power and working, namely, to the bringing forth of fruit, and what manner of fruit it was, as that it was deadly, that it was fruit to death. *The motions of ſins (ſaith the Apoſtle) Which were by the Law, had force in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.* So we ſee the particular things that are laid down in this fifth Verſe: I will not now enter on the other part of the Apoſtles comparison laid down Verſe 6. till we come to the handling of it.

*For when we were in the fleſh.*] The word *Fleſh*, hath many acceptions in Scripture, here it is put for the corruption of nature, even for that corruption and ſin, in which men are conceived and born, as *Pſal. 51. 5. I was born in iniquity, and in ſin hath my Mother conceived me.* And ſo the Apoſtles meaning is this, When we were in the corruption of nature, in our natural ſtate and condition, not regenerate, not partakers of the Spirit, and of the life of grace; for theſe two are oppoſed and ſet one againſt the other, *Rom. 8. 9. Now ye are not in the fleſh, but in the Spirit.* So that to be in the fleſh, is to be unregenerate, and altogether fleſhly. *Jude Epist. verſ. 19. Theſe are fleſhly, having not the Spirit, (the motions of ſins)* or as it is in the Original, *the paſſions or ſufferings of ſins.*

Now by theſe paſſions or ſufferings of ſins, the Apoſtle underſtands thoſe evil motions, that are continually ſtirred up by in-born corruption in the heart, and mind, even thoſe evil ſtirrings that do continually ariſe from the corruption



Rom. 7. 8.

of nature in the heart and mind, and do incite and stirre up a man, and as it were sollicite him to sin; and they are called passions or sufferings of sinne, by a *Metonymie*, because they do molest and trouble a man, and affect his mind, (indeed with his will) he being willing to be so troubled, so long as he is in his natural state and condition; yet (I say) they do continually trouble him, and they give him no rest; they will not suffer him at any time to rest, but are ever pricking him forward, drawing, egging and enticing him to sin, as *7am. 1. 14.* Every man (saith the Apostle) is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own concupiscence, and is entised; therefore they are called passions or sufferings of sin, (which were by the Law) that is, which were occasioned by the Law, the corruption of nature taking occasion by the Commandement; as *Vers. 8.* to send forth those evil motions; (had force) that is, had power; and as it is in the new Translation, did work, or had a powerful and effectual working: for so the words following signifie, (in our members.) By members in this place, we are to understand not onely the parts and members of the body, but by a *Synechdoche*, the powers and faculties of the soule; (to bring forth fruit unto death.) To bring forth deadly fruit: the meaning is this; To bring forth all manner of sins, which indeed are deadly, and of themselves bring death and destruction both to body and soul, *Rom. 6. 21.* The wages of sin is death. Thus then conceive we the Apostles meaning in this Verse, as if he had said;

For when we were in the corruption of our nature, in our natural state and condition, when we were unregenerate, then the evil motions that did continually arise in our hearts and minds, from our in-born corruption, and evermore sollicite and stirre us up to sin, and were occasioned by the Law, had power and full working in the powers of our soules, and in the parts and members of our bodies, even to the bringing forth of all manner of sins, which of themselves bring death and everlasting destruction both of body and soul.

Obser. 1.

Observe with me the reason here used by the Apostle, on that he said in the Verse before, that himself and other true Believers, being married to Christ, and to him raised from the dead, should bring forth fruit to God: thus he reasons; When we were under the Law, and married to the Law, we brought forth fruit answerable to our condition; therefore now being freed from the Law, and married to Christ, it is fit, and it is very meet and equal, that we should bring forth fruit to him: hence note we thus much;

Doctrine 1:  
True Believers are to bring forth fruits answerable to their holy condition.

That true Believers, such as hold themselves married to Christ, are to bring forth fruits answerable to that holy and excellent condition; as heretofore when they were in their natural state, they brought forth fruit suitable to that state; so now being set out of that state, and set into the state of grace, and married to Christ, they are to bring forth fruit fitting and agreeing to that excellent condition.

And to this purpose we find many exhortations in the Book of God. *Ephes. 4. 1.* I pray you, saith the Apostle, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherunto ye are called. And, *Vers. 17.* This I say therefore and testifie in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in vanity of their mind, 18. Having their cogitations darkened, and being strangers from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardnesse of their heart: *Vers. 19.* Which being past feeling, have given themselves unto wantonnesse to work all uncleannesse, even with greedinesse. But (saith he) *Vers. 20.* Ye have not so learned Christ. *Philip. 1. 27.* Let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ. And to these we might adde many like exhortations, all making this manifest, That true Believers being called, justified and sanctified, and espoused and married to Christ, are to bring forth fruit answerable to that holy and excellent condition; and there is reason for it, namely this;

Reason.

To this end they have fellowship with Christ, and are made partakers of the life of grace, that they should expresse it in the fruits of it in their lives, that they should bring forth fruits answerable to that grace.

Doest



Doest thou then perſwade thy ſelf that thou art married to Chriſt, and that thou haſt heavenly fellowſhip with him? Then remember that thou art to bring forth fruit answerable to that holy and that excellent condition; thou art to ſhew forth the vertues of him that hath called thee out of darkneſſe into his marvailous light, 1 *Pet.* 2.9. Far be it from thee to conform thy ſelf to the luſt of thy former ignorance; and to think, ſpeak or do as thou didſt, when thou waſt in thy natural ſtate and condition. And herein ſome are juſtly to be taxed, even ſuch as I am perſwaded are married to Chriſt, they yeeld too much to the corruption of their own hearts, and they too much follow the faſhion of the World. Oh conſider, that theſe are not fruits answerable to thy holy condition; and thus think with thy ſelf, when thou art ſet on by Satan, and when thine own corruption is ſtirring (as in the beſt it will be ſtirring) & entifiſing thee to any known ſin, think thou with thy ſelf, Is this a fruit answerable to my holy condition? ſhall I that am ſanctified and made partaker of the life of grace, carry my ſelf as thoſe that are prophane, and as yet in their natural ſtate? ſhall I that am married to *Chriſt* the Lord of life and glory, think, ſpeak, and do as thoſe that are wedded to the luſts of their own hearts? No, no; far be it from me: thus meditate, and thus think with thy ſelf, and withal, remember, that thou yeelding to the corruption of thine own heart, and thou being overtaken with pride, covetouſneſſe, or the like, it is a wound to thy conſcience, it brings diſhonour to God, it is a diſgrace to thy holy condition, it is a ſcandal to the weak, it hardens others in a wicked courſe, and it opens the mouthes of the enemies of the Goſpel: Think on theſe things, and take heed of yeelding to the luſts of thine own heart, labour thou to expreſſe that life of grace that is in thee, in the fruits of it, and to bring forth fruits answerable to thine holy condition; for certainly if thou do not, the wicked that expreſſe thine own former courſe of life, ſhall ſtand up and be a witneſſe againſt thee, at the day of judgment.

In the next place obſerve with me, how the Apoſtle ſets forth the ſtate and condition of himſelf and other Believers, when they were under the Law, and in their natural condition; he ſaith not, When the fleſh was in us, but, *When we were in the fleſh*; for the beſt of Gods children have fleſh and corruption in them; but to be in the fleſh, is far more: as to ſay, that a man is in drink or wine, is more then to ſay, that wine or drink is in him; for that may be in the beſt and in the moſt ſober: ſo indeed to be in the fleſh, is to be altogether fleſhly, and to be nothing but fleſh and corruption. Hence then we are taught to ſee what is the ſtate of ſuch as be yet unbelievers, & as yet unregenerate, namely this;

Obſerv.

They are altogether fleſhly, they are nothing but a lump of fleſh, even a lump of ſin and of corruption; they are drenched in ſin, and as it were, over head and ears in the mire and filthy puddle of ſin, their minds, their wills, their affections, all the powers of their ſoules, and all the parts of their bodies, are altogether fleſhly, and thorowout defiled with ſin. And thus the Lord ſpeaks of Jeruſalem, *Ezek.* 16.6. *When thou waſt in thy bloud*, not when bloud was in thee: and thus *Peter* ſpoke of *Simon Magus*, *Act.* 8.23. *Thou art in the gall of bitterneſſe*, thou art even overwhelmed in ſin. And hence it is that the Apoſtle ſaith, that the *Ephesians* before their conversion, were darkneſſe, *Ephes.* 5.8. And of the *Coloſſians*, Chap. 1. 21. he ſaith, That their minds were in evil works. And many like teſtimonies cleerly ſhew the truth of this point, that unbelievers and unregenerate perſons are nothing but a lump of fleſh, a lump of ſin and of corruption; and the reaſon is given, *Job.* 3.6.

*Doctrine 2.*  
Unregenerate  
perſons are  
altogether  
fleſhly.

That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh: it is nothing but fleſh, a lump of corruption, and it cannot be otherwiſe; for as *Job* ſaith, *Job* 14.4. Who can bring a clean thing out of filchineſſe?

Reaſons

Now this being ſo, that unbelievers and unregenerate perſons are nothing but a lump of ſin, it ſerves firſt to diſcover to natural men and women, their fearful ſtate and condition; for why? are they nothing but a lump of ſinne? certainly, then nothing can come from them but ſinne, they can do nothing but

*Uſe.*  
The fearful  
ſtate of natu-  
ral men diſco-  
vered.



Rom. 8. 8.  
Prov. 15. 8.

but provoke Gods wrath against them in every thing they do; even their best actions, their hearing of the Word, their Prayers, and the like, are sins to them. Men commonly please themselves much in this, that they live civilly, deal justly and truly in the world, hear the Word of God, and the like. Alas, this they may do, and yet be in the flesh: and so long as they are in the flesh, they can do nothing pleasing to God, *Rom. 8. 8. They that are in the flesh, cannot please God.* And, *Prov. 15. 8.* it is said, that *the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.*

Again, this being so, that unregenerate persons are nothing but a lump of sin, it may serve to pull down the pride of many that look bigg, and carry their heads aloft, and shew forth the pride of their hearts in their speech, in their gesture, in their apparel, and the like: if they well consider it, they have cause to hang down their heads, and to cover their faces for shame; for, what are they? Nothing but a lump of sin, and a dunghill of corruption; why then should they make themselves as painted Sepulchres? what cause hath the Leper to be proud, or the poor Lazer, who is full of botches and byles from top to toe, to set out himself in goodly apparel, and in rich array? Such is thy case, thou that art unregenerate, and as yet in thy natural state and condition, thou art full of filthinesse, and full of corruption in all the powers of thy soul, and in all the parts and members of thy body; and therefore thou hast no cause to set out thy self in thy vain and garish attire. Such as stand for the maintenance of pride, say, You know not what to prescribe, and how we are to attire our selves. Why, thine own corruption and filthinesse may teach thee how thou art to attire thy self.

The next thing we are to mark, is this, the Apostle having said that himself and other true Believers when they were in their natural state, they were in the flesh, he saith not barely, that then they brought forth fruit answerable to that state and condition, but he discovers the cause and root whence such fruit came, as that it came from the motions of sin that then were powerful, and had an effectual working in them. He saith, *When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the Law, had force in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.* Hence we are given to understand thus much;

Doctrine 3.  
The cause of  
all sin is in  
our selves.

That the cause of all sinne is in our selves: all manner of sins that men commit, come from a root within themselves, that men break out by swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and whoring, as it is, *Hos. 4. 2.* and by all sorts of sins. It comes from those motions of sinnes that arise in their hearts and minds from their own corruption; this we see cleer from this Text, and for this we have further plain evidence of Scripture. *Matth. 15. 18.* saith Christ, *The things which proceed out of the mouth, come from the heart, and they defile the man:* and then he subjoyns, *Vers. 19. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, slanders.* As if he had said, All defilement of man by sinne, whatsoever it is, it comes from within, it comes from the inward lust and corruption stirring up evil motions in the heart and mind, that is the very root of all sins. *1. Jam. 1. 13.* saith the Apostle, *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.* Then *Vers. 14. & 15. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own concupiscence, and is entised. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.* *Isai. 59.* from the beginning the Prophet complaining of the great and grievous sins of the wicked of his time, as that their works were works of iniquity, and the work of cruelty was in their hands, *Vers. 6.* their feet, their hands, their tongues, and all the parts of their bodies were set to work mischief, and did bring forth sin. *Vers. 7.* he addes this as the cause and root of all, that *their thoughts were wicked thoughts.* And so, *Gen. 6. 6.* it is said, that *the wickednesse of man was great in the earth.* And this is assigned as the cause of it, that *all the imaginations and thoughts of his heart were only evil continually:* there were

Gen. 6. 5.



were evil motions continually ſtirred up in the hearts and minds of men; and thence it was that they became ſo monſtrouſly wicked, and broke out into moſt fearful and horrible ſins; and indeed that the cauſe of all ſin is in our ſelves, may be further confirmed by this, as the reaſon and ground of it :

It is the corruption of our nature, even our in-born corruption, that gives matter and being to every ſin : were it not for the corruption of nature, even the corruption that is within our ſelves, the Devil could not faſten any temptation on us, neither could the World, with all the allurements and baits of it, draw us to any ſin; the parts and members of our bodies, are indeed as Porters to let ſin into the ſoul, from outward objects, but they could not ſo do, were there not corruption and ſin in our ſelves. Chriſt lived and converſed in the world as we do, and all the baits and allurements the world could afford, were offered to him, to draw him to ſin; yea, we read, *Matth. 4. 8, 9.* that the Devil took him up into an exceeding high Mountain, and ſhewed him all the Kingdomes of the World and the glory of them, and ſaid to him, *All theſe will I give thee :* and yet he could not faſten any ſin upon him; and why? Surely becauſe there was no corruption in him, there was nothing in him to give matter and being to ſin, as himſelf ſaith, *Joh. 14. 30.* *The Prince of this world (that is, the Devil) cometh, and hath nought in me: hath no matter to work on me. This makes it cleer, that were it not for the corruption of nature, neither the Devil nor the World could draw us to any ſin.*

Reason.

Matth. 4. 8, 9.

Joh. 14. 30.

And hence it is that Satan fits his temptations to the natural diſpoſition and temper, to the natural inclination; as *Cain* being malicious, he tempted him to murder: *Judas* being covetous, to ſell his Maſter. And,

This being ſo, that the corruption of nature gives matter and being to every ſin, and that the Devil and the World could not draw us to any ſin, were it not for our own in-born corruption; it muſt needs follow, that the cauſe of all ſin is in our ſelves, and that all manner of ſinnes that men commit, come from a root within themſelves, even from the evil motions that are ſtirring up in their hearts.

This firſt ſerves to teach us, where we are to lay the blame of our breaking out into any foul ſinne: when we break out into any ſinne whatſoever, that brings Gods puniſhing hand on us, and we feel the ſmart of it on our ſoules, or bodies, or both, we muſt learn to lay the fault and cauſe of that ſin, where it ought to lye: we are not to ſeek for the cauſe of it, or to lay the blame of it on any thing out of our ſelves; In our ſelves, even in our own bowels is the cauſe of that ſin.

Uſe 1.  
Where the blame of ſin ought to be laid.

It is the faſhion of moſt men to poſt off the fault and blame of their ſinnes from themſelves, and to lay it on ſome thing out of themſelves, as on the times in which they live, on their callings and conditions of life, on the provocations of others, on the command or example of others, on their deſtinies, as they uſe to ſpeak, on the Devil and the like: as ſay ſome, Oh, the times are ſuch, and we live in ſuch a time, as unleſſe we do as the time ſerves, unleſſe we frame our ſelves according to the courſe of the Age and Time in which we live, we ſhould be accounted no body, or there were no living for us in the world, or our callings and conditions are ſuch, as we cannot do otherwiſe then we do: we are Chaundlers, Victuallers, or the like, and we muſt needs ſell our commodities upon the Sabbath day to our Customers, or elſe we ſhould loſe their cuſtom, & ſo overturn our trading, and begger our ſelves. Alas, we have wives and children, and many that depend upon us. Some again ſay, They are provoked by others to this or that ſin; as you ſhall hear a quarrellous and troubleſome perſon lay the fault of his fretting, and chafing, and breaking out into curſing, ſwearing, and railing, and the like, on others that provoke him to it: Oh, he abuſed me, and ſuch dealing would anger a Saint, and ſtirre up any man to ſpeak. And do not Thieves and other Malefactours, when they are brought to ſome open ſhame or puniſhment for their faults, uſually cry out and ſay, Oh, woe worth ſuch a



man or such a woman, that ever I knew them I had I not fallen into their company, had not they drawn me to do evil, I had never come to this. And so some lay the blame of their sin, on the command of others; as a servant thinks he is free from blame, if he lye or swear, or coozen, and the like, because his Master bids him do so. And some having committed some foul sin, Oh, say they, it was my destiny, I was ordained to it, or the Devil owed me a shame, and now hath paid me. Thus and many other wayes do men post off the fault and blame of their sins from themselves: but alas, they deceive themselves; we must take notice of it, that the cause of every sin we commit, is in our selves.

James 3. 6.

I grant that the age and time in which thou livest, thy calling, thy condition, the provocation of others, and the like may be some occasion of thy sin: but certainly thine own corruption, the evil motions that are stirring in thine own heart, are the cause of it; and the cause of thy sin rests in thine own bosome; and therefore blame not the time, thy calling, the provocation or commandment of others, or any other thing but thy self: no, no, lay not the fault on the Devil himself, howsoever, as *James* saith. *Jam. 3. 6. thy tongue be set on fire of hell* (that is) of the Devil, yet know this for a truth, that the Devil could not use thy tongue, or any other part of thy body, as an instrument of sin, were it not for the corruption that is within thee; that is both the fire and fuel of sin, and that gives matter and being to every sin thou committest. And therefore learn thou to lay the fault where it ought to lye, even on the wickednesse of thine own heart, and the evil motions that arise in thine heart, and be humbled for them.

Use 2.  
We must chiefly look to the purging of our hearts.

James 4. 8.

Again, is it so, that the cause of all sin is in our selves, and all manner of sins that we commit come from a root within our selves, even from the evil motions that are stirred up in our hearts? then above all things, we must look to the purging of our hearts from sinful motions and lusts. Wouldst thou purge out the lust or pride that is in thine eye? Thou must labour then to purge out the lust that is in thine heart; for that fills thine eye with lust: it is but in vain and to no purpose, and it is but a preposterous course, to go about to purge thine hands, thy feet, thy tongue, &c. from sin, so long as thine heart abounds with evil motions and lusts. For example, it is but in vain for thee to seek to hold thine hand from violence and fraud, if thine heart be like *Ahabs* heart, if there be in thee a secret liking of thy Neighbours goods, tickling and delighting thine heart, and causing thee to wish, Oh, would such an house, or such a plot of ground were mine! for that evil motion, and that root of covetousnesse will at one time or other send forth bitter fruits. Oh then, labour thou not onely to cleanse thine hand, but to purge thine heart thereof, as *James* 4. 8. Labour to stock up the root of sin, even to mortifie and kill the evil motions and lusts that are stirring in thine heart, and when thou doest humble thy self for sin, and doest bewaile any particular sin wherein thou hast lived and lye, look thou go down to the root of that and of all thy other sins, even the corruption of thy nature, and the evil motions stirring in thine heart, and be humbled for them especially. *Psal. 51.* we read, that when *David* bewailed his foul sins of Adultery and Murder, he did not rest in bewailing of them onely, but he went down to the root of them, and of all his other sins, and cryed out, *Vers. 5. Behold, I was born in iniquity, and in sin hath my Mother conceived me.* As if he had said, Alas! here is the cause of these foul sins of mine, even the corruption of my nature, and the evil motions and lusts of mine own heart.

Thus must thou do in bewailing any known sin; thou must go down to the root of that, and of all other thy sins, and bewaile that: for otherwise thou mayst bewaile some grosse actual transgression through self-love, fear of shame or punishment; and so deceive thy self: and therefore remember thou, in bewailing any known actual sin, to go down to the root of that, and all thy other sins, thy corruption of nature, and thy evil motions that are in thine heart, and be chiefly humbled for them, and then through Gods mercy thou shalt find place



place to true repentance, even ſuch repentance as is joyned with true faith, apprehending the merit of *Chriſt his death*, for the pardon of all thy ſins.

Before we leave this, an Objection is to be answered. Some may ſay, that there be ſome ſins that come not from a root within our ſelves: For example; Impatient and ſtrange behaviour, raving, and haply uttering forth of blaſphemous ſpeeches, in time of ſome ſore, and ſome ſtrange and violent diſeaſe. Thoſe ſins ſometimes come not from a root within men themſelves, but onely from their diſeaſe. And again, there be ſometimes evil thoughts, even thoughts blaſphemous, directly againſt the Maſteſty of God, that are convey'd into the mind of man or woman, onely by the Devil, and ariſe not from the corruption of nature: and therefore it ſeems not to be generally true, that the cauſe of all ſin is in our ſelves.

Object.

For answer to this; We muſt learn rightly to conceive this point before delivered; we muſt know, it is to be underſtood of all the ſins that we commit, and are our ſins, and ſuch ſins, as, without Gods mercy, ſhall be laid to our charge: and being ſo underſtood, we ſhall eaſily ſee, that this objection makes not againſt the truth of it: for why? Impatient and ſtrange behaviour, raving and the like, coming onely, as it is confeſſed in the objection, from the violence of ſome diſeaſe: they may come not onely from the extremity of the diſeaſe, but alſo from a root of bitterneſſe that is within, even from a corrupt heart, and from a galled conſcience: ) but if they come onely from the violence and from the extremity of the diſeaſe, as they do in Gods children, certainly then they are not their ſins, but the ſins of their diſeaſe, and they ſhall never be laid to their charge.

Anſw.

And again, if evil thoughts, thoughts of blaſphemy, be conveyed into the mind of man or woman, onely from the Devil, aſſuredly they are not their ſins, but the Devils ſins, and he ſhall answer for them; they are their croſſes, not their ſins, and they ſhall never be laid to their charge, unleſſe they entertain them, and give conſent to them. And ſo the Objection made, doth not overthrow the general truth of this Poſition, That the cauſe of all ſin is in our ſelves, if it be rightly underſtood, namely, of ſuch ſins as we commit and are our ſinnes, and without Gods mercy ſhall be charged upon us: becauſe the ſins mentioned either come onely from the diſeaſe, and ſo are not our ſins, but the ſinnes of the diſeaſe, or come onely from the Devil; and ſo are not our ſins, but the ſins of the Devil, and he ſhall answer for them.

The next thing to be obſerved in this Verſe, is this, that the Apoſtle here calls the evil motions that are ſtirring in the hearts and minds of ſuch as be in the fleſh, *Paſſions of ſins, or perturbations of ſins*; for ſo the words ſignifie. Hence we may gather and conclude the troubled ſtate of unregenerate perſons.

That ſuch as are yet in their natural ſtate and condition, are continually troubled and moleſted with evil motions ſtirring in their hearts and minds; an unregenerate perſon is never at quiet, but continually haled and pulled this way or that way, by his own paſſions and the evil motions of heart and mind, they give him no reſt, but are ever pricking him forward, and ſtirring him up to ſin: and hence it is that the Apoſtle James, Chap. 4. 1. ſaith, that *the evil motions and luſts that are ſtirring in the hearts and minds of men, do fight in their members*: they are ever fighting, and warring, and troubling, and moleſting them. *Whence, ſaith he, are wars and contentions amongſt you? Even of luſts that fight in your members.* 1 Pet. 2. 11. ſaith the Apoſtle. *Dearly beloved, I beſeech you as Strangers and Pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly luſts, which fight againſt the ſoul, which trouble and diſturb the peace of the ſoul, and diſquiet them, and will not ſuffer them to be at reſt.* 2 Tim. 3. 6. The Apoſtle deſcribing ſimple women, that are carried away as a prey, by hypocritical and cunning Seducers, Corner-creepers, he thus ſpeaks of them, that *they are laden with ſins*; and he adds further, that *they are led with divers luſts*, or as the word ſignifieth, *They are acted and moved, they are impelled and driven this way and that way, by many evil motions*

*Doctrine 4.*  
Unregenerate  
perſons are  
continually  
troubled with  
evil motions  
ſtirring in  
their hearts.

1 Pet. 2. 11.

2 Tim. 3. 6.



*motions and lusts.* These places do sufficiently cleer and confirm the truth of this Conclusion, That unregenerate persons are never at quiet, but continually haled and pulled this way and that way by their own passions; as by Lust, by Anger, by Envy, by Covetousnesse, by Pride, and the like. and by the evil motions of their own hearts and minds: and the reason of this is,

*Reason.*

The corruption of nature being in full force and strength, as it is in the unregenerate, it sends up continually evil motions, evil thoughts and desires, into the heart and mind, as a burning hot fiery furnace continually sends up smoke and sparks of fire.

And therefore it must needs be, that such as be in the flesh, and be yet unregenerate, they are continually pulled and drawn this way and that way (though willingly of their own accord) by their own passions, and the evil motions of their own hearts and minds give them no rest at all.

*Use 1.*

The miserable condition of unregenerate persons, in regard of their unruly passions.

Here then take we notice of the miserable condition of unregenerate persons, even of such as yet are in their natural state and condition; they are in a miserable taking. If a man were so troubled and vexed in his body, that he could take no rest night nor day, but that his body were continually molested, tumbled, and tossed up and down, and as it were continually on the rack, and that whether he sit, or stand, or lye down, all were one, he could find no ease, no intermission of his trouble and vexation, that man would hold himself, and that justly, in a pitiful plight, and a miserable taking. Now thus it is with an unregenerate person, in regard of his soul; his soul is never at rest, his soul is continually without any intermission haled and pulled, tugged and drawn this way and that way, by his own passions and perturbations, his soul is continually troubled either with lust, or envy, or anger, or fear, or carnal love, or carnal joy, or with one unruly passion or other, and is never at quiet; that is a miserable condition if men had eyes to see it: indeed unregenerate persons see not their misery in this respect, their unruly passions and disordered affections blinding their minds, and dazeling and dimming their judgements; but therein is their misery doubled on them, and their danger is far greater in that respect: for thence it comes that they willingly imbrace their own trouble, and go on in it with pleasure. Unregenerate persons may please themselves, because they enjoy outward peace and prosperity, and have all things at will, and that heart can wish in the world: but alas, what is that, so long as there is within, even in their souls, a seed-plot of trouble and disquietnesse, and their soules are never at rest, but are continually haled and pulled this way and that way, by their own unruly passions? and as the Lord saith by his Prophet, *Isa. 57. 20. They are like the raging Sea that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt continually.* Oh, so long as they be in that case, they are in a miserable taking, and if they had eyes opened to see it, they would so think, and so judge of themselves. And indeed for a second use of the point:

*Isa. 57. 20.*

*Use 2.*

Gods children are bound to magnifie Gods mercy, in freeing them from unruly passions.

In this respect, Gods children, such as are truly regenerate, are exceedingly bound to magnifie Gods mercy, that he of his mercy hath vouchsafed to set them out of that miserable condition; to have the heart and mind continually tugged and drawn this way and that way with unruly passions, and with the motions of sins, is a most miserable thing. Now this Gods children are freed from; indeed they have sometimes unruly passions in their soules, as *Jam. 5. 17.* it is said, *HABIAS* *man subject to like passions as we are:* but they are not continually troubled with them, as the unregenerate are; unruly passions are as strangers, that now and then come; not as home-dwellers; they have no continual residence and abode in their hearts. And let all Gods children be mindful to blesse God, as for other mercies, so for this as a special mercy, that they are freed from the continual trouble of their own unruly passions.

*Note.*  
A Popish error discovered.

Now here we see, that the Apostle calls these *motions*: he speaks of the motions of sins; his meaning is, that they were evil motions: and hence it is cleer against the Papists (I will but onely name it) That the first motions that arise in



in our minds from the corruption of our nature, are evil, and are finnes, though consent of will do not follow : and all ſins are not voluntary, as the Papists reach : for there may be ſome motions in the mind, that want conformity with the Law of God ; and being ſuch, certainly they are ſins, whether they be with consent of will or no, and though we give no consent to them, yet they are ſins. I will not further ſtand on that.

The next thing to be obſerved is this ; the Apoſtle addes (*which were by the Law*) not meaning that thoſe motions of ſins had their being from the Law, as if the Law had given being to them, as ſome ancient Hereticks thought, miſconceiving the Apoſtles meaning : but that they were occaſioned by the Law, as *Verſ. 8.* he ſaith, *Sin took occaſion by the commandement.* How ſin was occaſioned by the Law, afterwards.

But we ſee, the Apoſtle expounds himſelf in this very Chapter, what he means by this, that *the motions of ſins which were by the Law, had force in our members to bring forth fruit unto death* : and that I will note hence is this ;

That what thing ſoever being needful to be known, is in one place of Scripture obſcurely delivered, the ſame is in another place more plainly expreſſed. The Scripture is ſufficient in it ſelf for the anſwering and reſolving of all neceſſary doubts. For example, to inſiſt in ſome particulars, *Gen. 17. 10.* *Circumciſion* is called *the Covenant* ; and, *Verſ. 11.* the ſign of the *Covenant*. *Exod. 12. 10, 11.* The *Paſchal Lamb* is called *the Paſſeover* : and, *Verſ. 27.* *The ſacrifice of the Lords Paſſeover* : and ſo that form of ſpeech uſed by Chriſt in the inſtitution of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, which the Papists ſo much abuſe and pervert, to prove the real preſence of the Body and Blood of Chriſt in the Sacrament after a corporal manner, is plainly expounded both by Chriſt himſelf and by the Apoſtle *Paul* : for when Chriſt ſaith, *Do this in remembrance of me* : and the Apoſtle, *1 Cor. 11. 26.* *As often as ye ſhall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye ſhew the Lords death till he come* : they do plainly ſhew, that that phraſe of ſpeech is thus to be underſtood, that *the Bread and Wine in the Sacrament* are viſible ſigns, and representations of the Body and Blood of Chriſt. I might inſiſt in many more particulars, ſhewing this to be the truth : That what thing ſoever is needful to be known, is in one place of Scripture obſcurely delivered, the ſame is in another place more plainly expreſſed ; and the reaſon of this is given by the Apoſtle, *2 Tim. 3. 15.*

*Doctrin 5.*  
That which is in one place of Scripture obſcurely delivered, being needful to be known, is in another place more plainly expreſſed.

The Scripture is able to make wiſe to ſalvation, it is a perfect rule of holineſſe and righteouſneſſe, it contains all things needful to be known, believed and practiſed ; and therefore it is ſufficient in it ſelf to anſwer and reſolve all neceſſary doubts. And it being ſo, that what in one place of Scripture is obſcurely delivered, being needful to be known, is in another place more plainly expreſſed, it muſt needs be granted,

*Reason.*

That the Scripture is the beſt expounder of Scripture ; and the beſt way to expound Scripture, is by Scripture it ſelf, and we for our parts muſt learn to apply Scripture with Scripture ; we muſt ſo apply one place of Scripture, as that we forget not another that may help us in the right application of it ; for this is that wherein the Devil and their own corrupt hearts deceive many ; they apply one place of Scripture, not conſidering of another that may teach them rightly to apply it. For example, many hale and pull to themſelves the comfort of ſuch places of Scripture as ſet forth Gods mercy, and make known that God is rich in grace, and abundant in pity and compaſſion, when they turn the grace of God into wantonneſſes, and are ſuch as walk after the ſtubbornneſſe of their own hearts, and go on with an high hand and ſtiſſe neck in a courſe of ſin, adding drunkenneſſe to thirſt, yet they perſwade themſelves they ſhall find mercy from the Lord : and why ? God is rich in mercy ; never remembering, that Gods *mercy and truth go together*, *Pſal. 25. 10.* and to apply thoſe places of Scripture that ſound forth Gods mercy, with that ſpeech of *Mosés*, *Dent. 29. 20.* that God will not be merciful to ſuch, but the wrath of the Lord, and his jealousie

*Uſe.*  
Scripture is the beſt expounder of Scripture, and it is to be applied by Scripture.



Math. 20. 15.

Note.

Observ.

**Doctrine 6.**  
Evil motions  
in the hearts  
and mindes of  
unregenerate  
persons, are  
strong, power-  
ful, and pre-  
vailing.  
2 Pet. 2. 14.

jealousie shall smoke against them, and every curse that is written in the book of God shall light upon them : never thinking on that rule of the Apostle, *Gal. 6. 16.* teaching them to whom mercy belongs. (namely) to such as walk after the Apostles rule. So some in another case take hold of that sentence, *Matth. 20. 15.* *Is it not lawful for me to do as I will with mine own?* (which indeed is a peculiar priviledg belonging onely to God) to bolster out their abuse of the good things they enjoy, and think they may use them as they list, never remembring what they are taught in other places of Scripture, that they have nothing simply their own, but that which they have, they have received of the Lord, and must be accomptant to him even for every bit of bread they put into their mouthes. Thus and many other wayes do men apply one place of Scripture, not remembring another that might help them in the right application of it; and so indeed they misapply Scripture; and so doing, *that Scripture to them, is not the Word of God, but their own conceit,* and they profane the holy Word of God, and make themselves guilty of a foul and fearful sin, even of taking the Name of the Lord in vain, for which he saith, he will not hold them guiltlesse, in the third Commandment.

Learn we then to apply Scripture with Scripture, even so to apply one place of Scripture, as that we forget not another that may help us in the right understanding of it; for then onely shall we finde the word of God as it is in it self, a word of sweetnesse and sound comfort. It followeth, (*had force in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.*)

In these words the Apostle makes known the power and working of evil motions that were in himself and other true believers, when they were in the flesh, that then those motions had a powerful and effectual working to bring forth sin in the powers of their soules, and in the parts and members of their bodies. Hence then we may easily see this conclusion laid before us.

That the evil motions, that are stirring in the hearts and minds of unregenerate persons, are no weak and feeble motions, but they are strong, and powerful, and prevailing motions, they are *energetical* and working motions, and they do strongly prevail, even to the bringing forth of evil fruits in their souls and bodies, in all the powers of the one, and in all the parts and members of the other. If an evil motion, a stirring to sin, arise in the heart of an unregenerate person from own corruption, it carries him as with Wind and Tyde, even with violence to sin, it will not rest till it have brought forth sin, 2 Pet. 2. 14. the Apostle describing false Teachers, and Seducers, who no doubt are unregenerate, he saith of them, *Ver. 14.* that *they have eyes full of Adultery*: the lust that is stirring in their hearts, is so strong and so prevailing, as it fills their eyes full of adultery; yea, he adds, that their eyes are so filled with lust, that they cannot cease to sin, and the lust of their hearts is so powerful, and hath such a working in them, as it gives their eyes no rest, but makes them sin in lust and wantonnesse uncessantly and without intermission, *Prov. 4. 16, 17.* The holy man of God setting forth the manners of the wicked, he saith, *They cannot sleep, except they have done evil, and their sleep departeth, except they cause some to fall.* And, *They eat the bread of wickednesse, and drink the wine of violence.* The motions and stirrings to sin that are in their hearts and mindes, are so strong and so powerful, as they give them no rest, but make them break their sleep to do evil, and to hunger and thirst after it, as after meat and drink, when they are hungry and thirsty: we may see the truth of this in many examples; in *Cain*, in *Achitophel*, in *Ahab*, in *Judas*, and in many others.

Gen. 4. 8.

*Cain* having a motion of malice and envy stirring in his heart against his brother, it was so strong and so powerful in him, that it would never let him rest, till he had imbrued his hands in the blood of his brother, *Gen. 4. 8.*

*Achitophels* heart being taken up with the motions of pride, and with an high conceit of his own wisdom, they were so strong and so powerful in him, as it made him rather lay violent hands on himself, then he would endure that his counsel



countel ſhould be neglected, 2 Sam. 17. 23. And we read of *Ahab*, 1 King. 21. 4. that his covetous humour, his longing deſire after *Naboths Vineyard*, was ſo ſtrong and ſo prevailing in him, as upon *Naboths* refusal to let him have it, it made him ſick and ſullen, and he would eat no bread. And we know how ſtrong the motion of covetouſneſſe was in the heart of *Judas*, it gave him no reſt, till he had moſt wickedly ſold his Maſter, the Lord Jeſus.

We might inſtance in many other examples of this kind; yea, common experience ſhews the truth of this point; we ſee in common experience, that the motions of ſins that are ſtirring in the hearts of unregenerate perſons, are ſo ſtrong and ſo powerful in them, as they make them mad on ſin. Do we not ſee, that motions to pride, ſtirring in the hearts of ſome, make them mad on new-fangles? and do not the motions of covetouſneſſe make ſome even mad on the World? and if they be never ſo little croſſed, oh! they fret and ſtorm and take on exceedingly. And how doth the luſt of uncleanneſſe prevail with ſome? doth it not make them, as it is, *Job 24. 15. wait for the twilight, and ſay, None eye ſhall ſee them*, and diſguiſe their faces, and ſeek all occaſions for the fulfilling of their luſt? And is it not thus with ſuch as are ſtirred up to ſwilling and exceſſive drinking? doth not that evil motion ſtirring in their hearts, prevail more with them to draw them to the ſin of drunkenneſſe, then the voice of God in his Word, or any admonition to keep them from it? do they not run mad on that ſin, and will not be turned from it? VVoful experience ſhews this to be moſt true. The reaſon and ground of this truth is this:

Such as be unregenerate, and as yet in their natural ſtate, they have no dram of ſanctifying grace to check the evil motions that are ſtirring in their hearts, yea, commonly the evil motions that are ſtirring in their hearts, are agreeable to their natural temper and diſpoſition, to their natural inclination; and ſo there is not ſo much as reſtraining grace to hinder them. And therefore no marvel, though they be ſtrong and powerful in them. And hereupon we may certainly conclude, that the evil motions that are ſtirring in the hearts of unregenerate perſons, are not weak and feeble motions, but they are ſtrong & powerful, & do ſtrongly prevail to the bringing forth of evil fruit in their ſouls and bodies.

This may ſerve firſt to diſcover to many that they are unregenerate, and that they are yet in their natural ſtate and condition; for why? are there not many that can witneſſe againſt themſelves, that the evil motions that are ſtirring in their hearts, are no weak and feeble motions, but are ſtrong and powerful, and do carry them even with violence to ſinne, and do make them ſeek all occaſions to praſtiſe it? and they run even mad on ſin? And to inſiſt in ſome particular, are there not ſome, whoſe hearts being ſtirred up to pride, do finde the motions to that ſinne moſt ſtrong and powerful in them, and that they are carried with violence to the praſtiſe of it? and they will not be turned from it by any means, they will follow the faſhion, and they will ſet out the vanity and pride of their hearts, in their garish and new-fangled apparel, whatſoever can be ſaid to the contrary? and ſome being ſtirred up to malice and envy, do they not find malicious motions boyling in their hearts? and are they not carried with violence to malicious praſtiſes, and their malice gives them no reſt, but makes them break out into railing, and bitter terms, and vile praſtiſes againſt their Brethren, and if they durſt, they would lay violent hands on them, and take away their lives? and ſo ſome being ſtirred up to drunkenneſſe, oh! how violently and with what eagerneſſe do they follow after that ſinne? Certainly ſuch perſons are in their natural ſtate and condition; and ſo long as they are in that ſtate, they are in a fearful ſtate, they can finde no true comfort in any thing, their beſt works are abominable in the ſight of God; they can have no true peace in their own ſouls.

Again, is it ſo, that the evil motions that are ſtirring in the hearts of unregenerate perſons, are no weak and feeble motions, but ſtrong and powerful, and do ſtrongly prevail in them, to the bringing forth of ſin in their ſouls and bodies;

2 Sam. 17. 23.  
1 King. 21. 4.

Job 24. 15.

Reason.

Uſe 1.  
Many diſcovered to be unregenerate perſons.

Uſe 2.  
That a man can at his own time and pleaſure ſubdue the evil motions of his own heart, is but a fancy.

Then



Then let no man fancy to himself, that he can at his own time and pleasure subdue the evil motions of his own heart, and mortifie and kill them, and turn the course of his heart another way when he will. It is a conceit that runs in the minds of most men, helped forward by strong delusion of the Devil, that when they will, they can subdue the evil motions of their own hearts; but alas, they deceive themselves, evil motions stirring in their hearts, are no weak & feeble motions, but they are strong and powerful, and the longer they continue, the stronger they grow, and by continuance they become more powerful and more prevailing; for then they have not onely the Devil continually to help them forward, but they have also nature and custome, strength of wit, strength of body, yea haply wealth, and honour, and all on their side. And hence it is that the most witty, learned, strong, noble, and rich, are commonly the most notorious wicked ones that live on the face of the earth, and become the most vile monsters in all outrage of sin.

Let no man then fancy to himself, that he can at his own time and pleasure vanquish and subdue the evil motions that are stirring in his heart, and so neglect the timely use of the means that serve to subdue them, but let every one of us learn betimes, to use the means that serve to that purpose, namely, a diligent hearing, reading and meditating in the Word of God, and let us apply the threatnings of it, that are directly against our evil motions, and labour to get faith into our hearts, whereby we may draw vertue from the death of Christ, to mortifie, kill and crucifie the flesh, with the evil affections and lusts of it, and let us be careful to avoid all occasions that may stirre up evil motions in our hearts, and be earnest and frequent in calling on God, that he would give us strength of grace against all our evil motions and stirrings to sinne. And hereupon Parents, Masters, and such as have the government of Youth, are to learn their duty, namely this, they may discern to what sin their children and such as be under their charge be inclined, by their carriage, and what evil motions be stirring in their hearts; and they are to labour by instruction, by admonition, by reproof, by moderate and seasonable correction, to subdue them, *Prov. 22. 15.* There is a bundle of folly in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it out. If Parents suffer corruption and evil motions that be in their children, to grow to an head, they will in time become incurable.

The next thing that comes to be considered, is the subject wherein the motions of sins had force in the Apostle himself, and in other true Believers, when they were in the flesh, and that is expressed in these words, *In our members*, that is, in the powers of our souls, and in the parts and members of our bodies. Hence note we in a word,

*Doctrine 7.*

That the motions of sins that are stirring in the hearts and minds of unregenerate persons, are powerful and strong, and have an effectual working in all the powers of their souls, and in all the parts and members of their bodies; for the Apostle speaks indefinitely: and where then is any place for freedome of Will held and taught by the Papists?

*Use.*

Freedom of Will confuted.

They hold and teach, That the Will of man in his natural state, hath a power in it self to will that which is truly good, which is a grosse and foul errour: and if we had no more but this very Text, it were sufficient to confute it: *For if the motions of sins be powerful and prevailing in all the powers of the soul*, and in all the parts and members of the body in such as be unregenerate, it cannot be, that the Will of an unregenerate man hath any power in it self to will that which is truly good, it is not possible; but let it suffice to have named this. The point here offered, I will stand on, is this; hence we are further given to understand thus much:

*\* Doctrine 8.*

The corruption of nature shews forth the powerful working of it in the evil motions of it, in the powers of the soul, and in the parts and members of the body.

\* That the corruption of nature shewes forth the power and working of it, in the evil motions of it, in the powers of the soul, and in the parts and members of the body; these evil motions and stirrings to sin, as we have heard, are strong and powerful in unregenerate persons, and they exercise their power and working



ing in the powers of the soul, and in the parts and members of their bodies, and they shew themselves prevailing, in that they bring forth sin ordinarily in the faculties of their souls, and in the parts and members of their bodies. The force of evil motions that are stirring in the hearts and minds of unregenerate persons, appears in this, that they break out into sin ordinarily in the powers of their souls, and in the parts and members of their bodies. As some corrupt and poysonous humour in the body, shews the poyson and strength of it, in breaking out into Byles, and Blisters, and Ulcers in the outward parts of the body: So evil motions that are stirring within, in the heart and mind, shew forth the force and poyson of them, in breaking out, and in bringing forth sin ordinarily in the powers of the soul, and in the parts and members of the body. And therefore we find, that the Apostle, setting forth the corruption of nature in the full force and strength of it, Chap. 3. of this Epistle, he shewes, that it hath a powerful working in the several powers of the soul, and in the several parts and members of the body, *Vers. 13, 14, 15.* speaking of men in their natural state, he saith; *Their throat is an open Sepulchre, and they have used their tongues to deceit.* As if he had said, The corruption of nature in the evil motions and working of it, shews forth the power, strength, and force of it, that it is indeed strong and prevailing in the heart and mind, in that it breaks out and shews it self, both in bringing forth sin usually in the powers of the soul, and in the parts and members of the body.

We may observe, that the Apostle sometimes exhorts, that the corruptions and evil motions that are stirring in the heart, should be suppressed, and kept from breaking out by the parts and members of the body, *Ephes. 4. 29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouthes.* *Ephes. 5. 3. Fornication, and all uncleanness, and covetousness, let it not be once named amongst you, as it becometh Saints.* *Coloss. 3. 8. Put away filthy speaking out of your mouth.* As if he had said, Howsoever it cannot be, but that sometimes unclean conceits will be either cast into your hearts by Satan, or arise from your own corruption, yet suffer them not to break out of your mouthes; let not your mouthes utter the filthiness that haply is conceived in your hearts; as much as possibly you can, keep your hearts clean and free from all filthy thoughts: but if the heart conceive filthiness, yet let not the mouth utter it. That is the purpose of the Apostle, in so exhorting, *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouthes:* and, *Put away filthy speaking out of your mouth.*

Now the Apostle thus exhorting, no doubt, he would have us to know, that unclean conceits and evil motions that are stirring in the heart, then shew themselves most strong, powerful and prevailing, when they break out and bring forth sin by the parts and members of the body; and so he confirms the point in hand.

*That the evil motions that are stirring in the hearts and minds of unregenerate persons, shew themselves powerful and prevailing in this, that they break out and bring forth sin ordinarily in the powers of their souls, and in the parts and members of their bodies; and it must needs be so, the reason of it is plain:*

For then the inward corruption doth manifest the power and strength of it, when it breaks out into actual sin and transgression; and so the evil motions that arise from thence, must needs shew themselves powerful, and prevailing, and of force, when they are able to bring forth sinne, and do ordinarily bring forth sinne in the powers of the soul, and in the parts and members of the body.

This being a truth, it may serve to take away that idle and vain excuse that many plead for themselves, and is rife and common in the mouthes of many; You shall hear some, whose mouthes are full of bitterness, they swear ordinarily, and they commonly talk idely, and vainly, and the like: yet when they hear of these things, and are justly reprov'd for them, thus they seek to put by the reproof; Indeed, say they, it is true; it is ill we do: but yet we would have you know,

B

that

Reason.

Use.

A vain and foolish excuse that some plead for their sinnes removed.



that our hearts are good, and we have as good hearts as the best.

The Doctrine now delivered, shews this to be a most foolish and vain shift. Is thine heart good, and yet thy mouth runs over with folly and sinne? Can there be a good heart within, and yet the eyes, ears, hands and mouth are full of wickednesse without? is that possible? No, no, deceive not thy self: the motions of sins shew themselves strong, and powerful, and prevailing in thee, in that they ordinarily break out, and bring forth sin in the powers of thy soul, and in the parts and members of thy body. Christ saith, *Matth. 12. 34. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* And indeed the mouth abounding with oathes, and running over with cursed speeches, it is a plain evidence that there is abundance of sin in the heart; If the tongue, as James speaketh *Jam. 3. 6, 8. be an unruly evil, and a world of wickednesse*, what is then in the heart? And as one saith well, If there be a beam of wickednesse in the eye, there is a great stake in the heart; and therefore talk not of a clean heart, when thou hast a foul mouth; without question, thine heart is full of filchinesse; so long as thy mouth abounds with folly and sin, a man may judge of thine heart. When a man sees abundance of smoke coming out of the top of a Chimney, he may say certainly, There is much fire on the hearth: & so when a man sees abundance of sin breaking out by the parts and members of the body, he may boldly say, There is much corruption in the heart: *Prov. 6. 12, 13. Solomon* having said, that *a wicked man walks with a froward mouth, and makes a sign with his eyes, he signifieth with his feet, he instructeth with his fingers*; he concludes, that certainly lewd things are in his heart. And thus indeed a man may safely judge of thee, when he sees sin breaking out by the parts and members of the body.

And therefore deceive not thy self, sooth not up thy self with a conceit of a good heart, when thou hast a foul mouth; if thy tongue, thine eyes, thy mouth, thy hands, and thy feet be used as instruments of the common practice of sinne, certainly the motions of sins are strong, powerful and prevailing in thine heart, and sin is strong in thee, and thou art yet under the bondage of it, yea thou art then under the bondage of the Devil, and he holds up his scepter in thine heart, and thou art in a fearful condition.

The Apostle addes in the last place, *To bring forth fruit unto death*, that is, as I shewed, to bring forth all manner of sins, which are deadly, and of themselves bring death and destruction both on body and soul: the point hence is this:

Doctrine 9:  
Every sin of it  
self is deadly  
and damnable.

Reason.

That every sin, of it self, be it never so small, is deadly and damnable, and deserves death of body, and death of soul: and this we have heretofore stood on, and proved by this reason;

Every sin, be it never so small, is a transgression of the Law of God, it is either a direct transgression of the Law of God, or it wants conformity with it; and being so, it hath the curse of the Law belonging to it, *Gal. 3. 10. Cursed is every man that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them.* And what the curse of the Law is, Christ hath plainly taught, *Matth. 25. 41.* Even hell fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. Other proofs were added: I will not now stand to remember them.

But before I come to the use of this, an objection is to be answered. Some may say, We read, *1 Joh. 5. 16. 17. That there is a sin not to death: If any man see his brother sin a sin that is not unto death, let him ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I say not, That thou shouldest pray for it. All unrighteousnesse is sin, but there is a sin not unto death.*

Object.

Therefore it may seem not to be generally true, that every sin of it self deserveth death, even death of body, and death of soul.

Ans.

To this I answer, that the purpose of Saint John in that place, is not to teach, that any sinne of it self deserves not death of body and soul; for that were to contradict other places of Scripture: but to note a difference between the sin against the Holy Ghost, and all other sins, and to shew, that howsoever every other sin of it self deserveth death, yet it is pardonable, and pardon may be obtained



tained for it through Gods mercy ; but that the sinne against the Holy Ghost is unpardonable, and that that sin brings certain death, and that we are not to pray for such as fall into that sin, that is the meaning of that place, and so it makes not against this truth, That every sin of it self, be it never so small, is deadly, and damnable, and deserveth death of body, and death of soul. I will not meddle with the use that hath been made of this Doctrine, either of confutation or otherwise, but I will adde some further use of it, and that shall be only an earnest intreaty, that every one of us would suffer the truth now delivered, to sink into our hearts, and that we would be perswaded of this truth.

That every sin, of it self, be it never so small, is a fruit to death, and makes us liable to all plagues and Judgments of God in this life, and to everlasting perdition in the life to come. Rebellious and hard-hearted sinners are hardly perswaded of this, it will hardly sink into their heads and hearts, that their sinnes are so foul and haynous as Preachers would make them, and that every sin of it self deserves death and destruction both of body and soul.

*Use.*  
We are to be perswaded of this truth, that every sin is deadly and damnable.

If they were perswaded of these things, durst they live as they do, in Whoredome, in Drunkenesse, in Pride, and in other known sins? Durst they continue in Malice and Envy? Durst they Lie, Slander, Curse, Swear, Rail, and Revile, and break the Sabbath, and run, as commonly they do, into many fearful abominations? Surely, their living and continuance in these, and the like sins, is a plain evidence, they are not perswaded that every one of their sins deserves all the plagues and judgments of God in this life, and everlasting perdition in the life to come: and hence it is that they are not moved, they tremble not, when the judgments of God are justly denounced against their sins.

Let an out-cry be made, and one run thorow the streets and cry, Fire, fire; and our hearts are presently smitten with a sudden fear. But let the Minister cry, Fire, fire, yea, the fire of Gods vengeance, and let him justly denounce the fire of hell against pride, garishnesse in apparel, against whoredome, against drunkenesse; and whose heart amongst us trembles? who almost is any thing thereby moved? This shews plainly, that we are not perswaded that every one of our sins is deadly and damnable of it self, and makes us liable to all the plagues and judgments of God in this life, and to everlasting perdition in the life to come.

Well, let us in the fear of God learn to be perswaded of this truth, and withall remember, that if thou go on in thy known sins, with an high hand and stiffe neck, thou shalt not alwaies escape the punishing hand of God; at one time or other his judgments and his punishing hand will find thee out, and light on thee. Paradise could not shelter our first Parents from the hand of God, when they had sinned against him; and heaven it self, a place of greatest safety and security, could not keep the Reprobate Angels from the punishing hand of God, having sinned against him. Think on these things.

## V E R S. 6.

*But now we are delivered from the Law, being dead unto it, wherein we were holden, that we should serve in newnesse of Spirit, and not in the oldnesse of the Letter.*



The scope and drift of the Apostle, as heretofore I have shewed in these two Verses 5, 6. is this; by a comparison to amplify that particular, that himself and other true Believers should bring forth fruit to Christ: and thus he reasons; As when we were under the Law, and married to the Law, we brought forth fruits answerable to that condition: so now, being freed from the Law, and married to Christ, it is fit and meet we should bring forth fruit to him; so reasons the Apostle in these two Verses.



The first part of this comparison is laid down, *Vers. 5.* which we have already handled ; In this sixth Verse the Apostle comes to the other part of it, namely this, That himself and other true Believers, being now delivered from the Law, they ought, and they were bound in lieu of that mercy, to bring forth fruit to Christ, and to serve the Lord ; that is the general matter of this sixth Verse.

1. The particulars of it are these : First, the Apostle makes known, that himself and other true Believers were delivered from the Law, setting that in opposition to their former condition, in these words : *But now we are delivered from the Law.* As if he had said, We were heretofore in the flesh, and consequently under the Law ; but now we are in a contrary estate and condition, now we are delivered from the Law.

2. Secondly, he sets down the proof of that, that they were delivered from the Law, and that is from the death of that which held them in bondage under the Law, in the next words ; *That being dead, wherein we were holden.*

3. And then in the next place he layes down the end of their deliverance, that himself and other true Believers were delivered from the Law, to this end, that they should serve the Lord ; expressing also wherein, namely, *in newnesse of Spirit.* And that is further amplified by denial or removal of the contrary : *Not in the oldnesse of the Letter.*

Interpretation.

We see the relation this Verse hath to the foregoing matter, the general matter of it, and several branches of it. (*But now we*) by the persons in this place under the word (*we*) the Apostle means (as before I shewed) himself and all other true Believers both of Jews and Gentiles : and what it is to be delivered from the Law, I likewise made known before, namely this, not to be freed from all obedience to the Law, but to be freed from the rigour of the Law, and from the curse of the Law, and from the power of it, to stirre up to sin through the corruption of our nature ; and so these words, *But now we are delivered from the Law,* carry this sense ; *But now both I and you and all true Believers are freed from the rigour, and from the curse of the Law, and from the power of it.* (*Being dead unto it*) or rather as the new Translation hath it, *That being dead wherein we were held;* that I take to be the better reading, the word (*enim*) being supplied in the original, and in our English, the word (*it*) or (*that.*) Now these words (*That being dead*) some would have to be referred to the Law ; and the meaning to be this, We are delivered from the Law, the Law being dead. But (as reverend Beza saith well) the Apostle would not so say, that phrase, *That the Law of God is dead,* is not found in any of his Epistles : but these words (*That being dead*) are rather put down absolutely, as if the reading were thus, (*that thing being dead.*) And if any demand what is then meant by that *thing* ? I answer in a word, that sin, that corruption, that is in us by nature ; or rather indeed the force, the power and the strong working of that corruption, as we may easily gather from the context : for in the Verse before, the Apostle saith, *When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the Law, had force, had a strong and powerful working in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death :* and then here he subjoyns, *But now we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held.* And what can we understand by that thing, as best agreeing to the context and purpose of the Apostle, but even that force, that power and working of sin before spoken of, which it had in the Apostle and other true Believers, when they were in the flesh ?

(*Being dead unto it*) that is, being broken, and as it were, dead, and not able to bring forth cursed and bitter fruits as it was wont. (*Wherein we were holden*) the word rendred (*holden*) properly signifieth forcibly and tyrannically holden. The same word is used, *Rom. 1. 18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodlinesse and unrighteousnesse of men which with-hold.* that is, unjustly and forcibly with-hold the truth in unrighteousnesse. And so the meaning of these words is this ; Which did strongly, forcibly, and as a tyrant hold us in bondage under the Law. *That we should serve,* that is, that we should serve God, that



that we should yeeld sound and sincere obedience to the Will of God revealed in his Word. (*In newnesse of Spirit.*) To passe by the variety of Interpretations; by *newnesse of Spirit*, we are here to understand true holinesse both of heart and life, wrought in true Believers by the Spirit of Christ, and coming from them as they are regenerate, even from their souls renewed by the Spirit of grace; and therefore called *newnesse of Spirit*. (*Not in the oldnesse of the Letter*) that is, not in holinesse which is onely by the Ministry of the Law, which of it self is a dead letter, 2 Cor. 3. 6, 7. and is not able to give the Spirit; Gal. 3. 2. and so is only external and outward, and such as may come from men in their natural state and condition.

In which state Gods Children and true Believers were before their new birth in Christ, and therefore called the oldnesse of the Letter. And this Exposition may further be confirmed by that, Rom. 2. 29. where the *Apostle* saith, *True Circumcision is inward, of the heart, and then subjoyns in the Spirit, not in the Letter.* Thus then are we to conceive the meaning of the *Apostle* in the words of this Verse, as if he had said;

Rom. 2. 29.

*But now both I and you and all true Believers are freed from the rigour of the Law, and from the curse of it, and from the power of it to stirre us up to sin, and the force, power, and strong working of that corruption that is in us by nature being broken, and, as it were, dead, and not able to bring forth cursed and bitter fruits as it was wont, which in former times did strongly and forcibly, even as a Tyrant, hold us in bondage under the Law, that now we should yeeld sound and sincere obedience to the Will of God revealed in his Word, in true holinesse both of heart and life, wrought in us by the Spirit of Christ, and coming from our soules, renewed by the Spirit of grace, and not only in external and outward holinesse, such as is by the ministry of the Law, and may come from such as are yet in their natural state and condition, and in their old corruption.*

To passe by that which is offered unto us from the first words of this Verse, *But now we are delivered from the Law*, namely this.

That true Believers are freed from the rigour and curse of the Law, and from the power of it stirring up to sin. Of that we have spoken heretofore; therefore I passe by it.

In the first place consider we the general matter of this Verse. The *Apostle* makes known in this Verse in general thus much,

That himself and other true Believers being delivered from the Law, they ought, and they are bound in lieu of that deliverance to bring forth fruit to Christ, and to serve the Lord, that is the general drift of this Verse; hence we are taught,

That our freedome and deliverance from the rigour and curse of the Law, binds us strongly to the service of God; yea, the point is general, our freedome and deliverance from any yoke of bondage, either from sin, or from the consequence of sin, that which followes on sin, any misery or trouble whatsoever, is a strong bond binding us to serve the Lord, to glorifie him, and to walk before him in all holy obedience: when we are delivered from sin, or from any misery or trouble of body or mind, temporal or spiritual, we are bound, in lieu of that mercy, to walk before the Lord in all good conscience, even studying and endeavouring to please him in all things: the Scripture is plentiful in the proof of this. Luk. 1. 74, 75. saith old ZACHARY, *That we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, should serve him without fear all the dayes of our life, in holinesse and righteousness before him.* Exod. 20. 2. the Lord sets this as a strong Argument and motive to stirre up his People to serve him, and to bind them to yeeld obedience to his Laws and Commandements: *That he is the Lord their God, which brought them out of the Land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. I am* (saith he) *the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Therefore, Thou shalt have none other Gods before me.*

*Doctrine 13.*  
Freedome and deliverance from any yoke of bondage; binds strongly to the service of God.



And this bond of obedience is again remembred, *Micha* 6. 3, 4, 5. The Lord there complains by his Prophet, of the want of obedience, that the people did not serve him, and yeeld obedience to him as they ought to have done: he presseth this very Argument against them, to shew the greatnesse of their unthankfulnesse and disobedience: *O my people, (saith he) what have I done to thee, or wherein have I grieved thee? testifie against me. Surely, I have brought thee up out of the Land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants, and I have sent before thee MOSES, AARON, and MIRIAM. O my people, remember now what BALAK King of Moab had devised, and what BALAAM the son of BEOR answered him, from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the righteousnesse of the Lord. Matth. 11. 28.* Christ calls all to him that are weary and laden, clogged with the yoke and burden of their sins, promising ease and refreshing to them; but withal he subjoynes by way of restipulation or indenting with them again, *Vers. 9. Take my yoke on you, and learn of me, that I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your soules.* As if he had said, I vouchsafing this mercy to you, freeing you from the yoke and burden of your sins, pressing your soules as low as hell with discomfort; Oh, you are bound in lieu of this mercy, to yeeld this fruit to me again: you are to deny your selves, and your own reason, will, and affections, and to submit your wills to the obedience of the Gospel. And to this I might adde many other testimonies of Scripture cleering and confirming this truth, That our freedome from any yoke of bondage, from sin, or that which followes on sin, any misery or trouble, is a strong bond strictly binding us to serve the Lord, and to walk before him in all holy obedience: the reason of it is this;

Reason.

Our freedom from any yoke of bondage, binds us to be thankful to the Lord; we are to acknowledge his goodnesse and mercy, his power and good providence appearing to us in that our deliverance, and thankfully to remember it, and to praise him for the same; even Nature it self teacheth us to acknowledge the kindnesse of man that hath freed us from some trouble or danger, and to commend the means by which we have been freed from sicknesse, from imprisonment, or the like; and much more ought Religion to teach us, thankfully to acknowledge the goodnesse and power of God manifested in the same, he having either without means delivered us, or given means to us, and vouchsafed a blessing on them, and made them effectual for our deliverance.

Now our thankful acknowledgment and remembrance of the mercy and power of God in our deliverance, is expresse in walking worthy of that mercy in some measure of holy obedience; and therefore this must needs be held as a certain truth, That our freedome from any yoke of bondage, is a strong bond strictly binding us to serve the Lord, and to walk before him in all holy obedience.

Use.

Freedom from the rigour and curse of the Law, gives no liberty in men to live as they list.

Let no man then imagine, that he is freed from the rigour and curse of the Law, and therefore he may live as he list, and that he is therefore at liberty to follow the lusts of his own heart. Hath the Lord freed thee from hell, death and damnation? Hath he done so great things for thee, that thou shouldest serve the Devil, and serve the lusts of thine own heart? No, no; If thou so think, thou deceivest thy self, thy freedome from sin, and from the curse of the Law, binds thee strongly to all holy obedience: and if thou yeeld it not to the Lord, thou art the most unthankful wretch that lives on the face of the earth; it may be said to thee, as *Moses* saith to the People, *Dent. 32. 6.* Thou foolish and unwise person, dost thou so reward the Lord?

And to descend to some particulars: Hath the Lord freed thee from some special danger, from sicknesse, from some particular trouble of body or minde, besides deliverance from common troubles and dangers vouchsafed to thee, and dost thou forget it? Dost thou forget to be thankful, and to expresse thy thankfulness in some measure of holy obedience? Certainly then thou mayest justly look for plagues seven-fold more, as it is *Levit. 26. 24, 28.* and thou mayest



mayest justly look for a worse thing to come on thee, as Christ said to the man healed of his disease, *Joh. 5. 14. Thou art made whole : sinne no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.* If thou wouldst not provoke the Lord after sickness, or some other trouble removed from thee, to send a greater plague and judgement on thee, remember this, that thy deliverance from that trouble, sickness, and such like, binds thee strongly to all holy obedience, and thou art to have thine heart enlarged, and thy mouth opened in magnifying and praising the Lord for that mercy : yea, thou art to expresse thy thankfulness in heart, in tongue, and in life and conversation, and so to walk before the Lord, with greater care to please him : and therefore labour thou to be able to say with *David, Psal. 119. 71. It is good for me that I have been sick,* or in this or that trouble, and now am delivered : for I finde my self thereby humbled, and that now there is wrought in me a greater care to please the Lord and to walk humbly before the Lord. This thou must finde after deliverance from trouble either of body or mind ; and if it be not thus with thee, but after deliverance out of sickness or other trouble of body or mind, thou art either more careless, or at least not better then thou wast before ; but proud before, proud still ; covetous before, covetous still ; a drunkard before, and a drunkard still, which indeed is the case of too many ; and some there be, who in time of sickness, the hand of God being on them, have cryed out against pride and the vanities of this world, and some have complained of their ignorance and unprofitableness, and have promised amendment ; yet being delivered, have turned back again to their old byas, and become as bad or worse in their evil courses, then ever before : and if it be thus with thee, certainly that forgetfulness and that unthankfulness of thine, is a judgement of God on thee, and it seals up the wrath of God against thee ; and that affliction or trouble, out of which thou hast been delivered, is but a fore-runner of a greater and more fearful judgement of God to come upon thee.

Joh. 5. 14.

Psal. 119. 71.

In the next place we are to observe, how the *Apostle* here proves that himself and other true believers were delivered from the Law. Thus he proves it, that the force, the power, and the strong working of the corruption of nature, was broken, and as it were dead in them, and not able to bring forth the cursed fruit of it, as it was wont, and therefore they were delivered ; so reasons the *Apostle*. Hence we are given to understand thus much, That the power and force of sinne being weakened and broken in us, and as it were dead, and not able to bring forth the cursed fruits of it, as in former times it was wont, it is an Argument, and a plain evidence and proof of this, That we are freed from the Law, even from the rigour and curse of the Law.

If a man finde the force of sinne broken in himself, and that now the corruption of his nature hath not that strong, powerful and violent working in him as it hath had in times past, and that the evil motions of it have not force in his members to bring forth fruit unto death, he may certainly conclude, that he is freed from the rigour of the Law, and from the curse of it : and for this we have further evidence, *Rom. 8. 1. saith the Apostle, There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.* And then he subjoynes, *Which walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit :* thereby noting who they be that are and may assure themselves that they are freed from condemnation. As if he had said, In whom the grace of the Spirit is so powerful, as to subdue the corruption of their nature, and to bring it under ; so as now the force of it is weakned, and broken, and now they walk not after the lusts of the flesh, but after the Spirit. Certainly they are in Christ, and they may conclude, that they being freed from the curse of the Law, and from condemnation, they are not under either the rigour or curse of the Law.

Doctrine 2.

The power and force of sin being weakened in men, it proves that they are freed from the rigour and curse of the Law.

Rom. 8. 1.

And to this purpose the *Apostle* speaks plainly, *Gal. 5. 18. If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the Law :* If the power and strong working of sinne be broken in you, and that ye are now guided and led by the Spirit of grace



grace. yea are not under the Law; ye are freed from the rigour of the Law, and from the curse of it. 1 Tim. 1. 9. the Apostle saith, *Knowing this, or, We know this, It is a thing well known to us, that the Law is not given, or the Law lyeth not against a just man, against a man that is just and holy, both by righteousness imputed and inherent in him, and is sanctified by grace, and so hath the force and power of sin broken in him, the Law lyeth not against such a man, he is freed from it, in respect of the rigour and curse of it.*

These places (not to add any more) do sufficiently clear and confirm this truth: That if a man finde the force of sinne broken in himself, and that now the corruption of his nature hath not that strong and violent working in him as it hath had in former times, he may certainly conclude, that he is freed from the rigour of the Law, and from the curse of it; and the reason and ground of it is this.

Reason.

The force and strong working of sinne is weakned and broken onely by the power of the Spirit, and none have sin weakned and subdued in them, but onely such as have the Spirit of grace and sanctification; and he that hath the Spirit, certainly hath Christ, and having Christ, he hath all the benefits of Christ, and so must needs have freedom from the rigour of the Law, and from the curse of it.

Use 1.

How men may know that they are freed from the rigour and curse of the Law.

This truth serves to make known to us who they be that indeed are freed from the rigour, and from the curse of the Law. Every one that hath a good conceit of himself, every one is ready to assume and take this to himself, that he is freed from the rigour and from the curse of the Law: that howsoever he is a sinner, yet Christ hath dyed for him, and that Christ hath freed him from the desert of sinne, from hell, death and damnation: this the diuel will suffer any one to say. But wouldst thou prove it; and wouldst thou have such proof of it, as may comfort thine own soul in the time of tryal, and silence the diuel himself opposing against it? then labour thou to find this in thy self:

*"That the force of sinne is broken in thee, and that now it hath not that strong and powerful working in thee it was wont, to have: and from thence thou mayest certainly gather and conclude thy freedom from the rigour and from the curse of the Law. If thou think thou art freed from the curse of the Law, and that thou art not lyable to those plagues and judgements that are due to thy sins, but that Christ hath freed thee from them, and yet sin is as strong, as powerful, and as prevailing in thee as ever it was, and thou art carried with as violent a stream, to the committing of sinne as ever heretofore, certainly thou deceivest thy self. If thou wouldest be sure and on a good ground, assure thy self that thou art freed from the rigour and curse of the Law: then never rest till thou finde that the force and strong working of sinne is broken in thee, and that now the corruption of thy nature is not able to bring forth the cursed and bitter fruits of it, as it was wont to do; and from thence thou mayest certainly and infallibly conclude, that thou art freed from the rigour and from the curse of the Law.*

Quest.  
Answ.

Haply thou wilt say, But how shall I know that the force and strong working of sin is broken in me?

I answer, thou mayest know it by this; If so be thou find in thee a dislike and a striving against that sin thou art most inclined to, and being able to commit that sin, occasion being offered of committing of it, and being tempted to it; if then thou find in thee a striving against it, thou prayest against it, and thou usest all good means to keep thee from it, and out of a lothing of it, because it is sin, and not for fear of shame, punishment, or the like, thou abstainest from it, and if through violence of temptation thou be overcome and fall, yet it is with reluctance and with grief, and thou dost speedily recover thy self by repentance; surely then the power, force and strong working of sin is broken in thee: and thereupon thou mayest certainly conclude, that thou art freed from the rigour and from the curse of the Law,

Again,



Again, for a second use of this point. Is it so, that if a man find the force and strong working of sin weakened and broken in himself, he may thence certainly conclude, that he is freed from the rigour and from the curse of the Law? Here is then a ground of sweet and excellent comfort, for all those that find the power and force of sin broken in themselves. Dost thou find that howsoever sin still remains in thee, yet the strength of it is weakened and abated, and now it is not able to bring forth the cursed and bitter fruits of it as it was wont? Is it thus with thee? Then comfort thy self, here is a ground of sound and sweet comfort indeed; hereupon thou mayst certainly conclude, to the comfort of thine own soul, that thou art freed from the rigour of the Law, and from the curse of it; hereupon thou mayest assure thy self, that thou setting thy self to please the Lord, and to walk before him in truth of heart in all holy obedience, though thou fail and come short of that thou oughtest to do, yet even thy weak, thy imperfect, and thy defective obedience is accepted of the Lord, and that which is wanting on thy part, is supplied through Christ, and thy obedience is made pleasing to God: And again, thou mayst assure thy self, that the curse of the Law is removed from thee, that Gods wrath is turned from thee, that the nature of his threatnings are altogether changed in respect of thee, and that neither sin, nor the Devil, nor his instruments, nor all the power of hell can do any thing to thy hurt. And that is a sweet comfort to thee: and let all such as find the force and strong working of sin broken in them, take notice of it, and think on it to their comfort.

Use 2.  
Comfort for  
all that find  
the power and  
force of sin  
broken in  
themselves.

(*That being dead wherein we were holden.*) The Papists from this place gather and conclude, that sin hath no life at all in the regenerate, but is thoroughly dead, and that original corruption is not onely not imputed, but not alive, or having any being in the righteous. So they teach. But indeed in this very Chapter, to go no farther, their opinion is sufficiently confuted. The Apostle shews in his own example, that in the most regenerate there is sin remaining, as *Verf. 20. Sin that dwelleth in me. Verf. 21. Evil is present with me. And Verf. 23. I see another Law in my members, rebelling against the Law of my mind, and leading me captive unto the Law of sin which is in my members.* And therefore sin still remains in the most regenerate, yet weakened and wounded even with a deadly wound, so as it is not able to exercise the power and force of it as it was wont: and the Lord will have sin still in part remaining in the regenerate, to exercise them in striving against it, to humble them, and that his mercy may more appear in freeing them from the strength and power of it, and that they may be more thankful to him for the same.

A Popish collection confuted.

We are further to mark, that the Apostle saith, *That being dead wherein we were holden.* He saith not, that being dead that was in us, the force, the power, and strong working of sinne being dead that was in us; but that wherein we were held, that is, which did strongly, and forcibly, and as a Tyrant, hold us in bondage under the Law. This phrase and manner of speech is to be observed. Hence we may gather.

That sinne carries a great sway in unregenerate persons, the corruption of nature is a Tyrant in them that are yet in their natural state and condition, and it holds them in a miserable slavery and bondage; it holds them under the rigour of the Law, and under the curse of it, and under the power of it, they are ready to be stirred up to sinne, even by the Law, through the corruption that is in them, and that is a miserable bondage: and hence it is that unregenerate persons are said to *walk after their own lusts*, Jud. Epist. verf. 18. *yea, to run into all excesses of riot, and to think it strange, that others runne not with them into the same; and because they do not, therefore they reproach them, 1 Pet. 4. 4.*

Doctrine 3.  
Sin is a Tyrant  
in unregenerate  
persons.

To this purpose I might cite many testimonies; but the point was in part handled before. I shewed in the Verse before, That the motions of sins that arise from the corruption of nature, in the hearts of unregenerate persons, are strong, powerful, and prevailing, they make men break their sleep to do evil,  
and



*Use.*  
No easie mat-  
ter to be deli-  
vered from the  
bondage of sin

and to hunger and thirst after it, as after their appointed food, and to take great pains to do wickedly, *Jerem. 9. 5.* Our own woful experience shews this to be most true. Oh then, deceive not thy self, whosoever thou art, think not that thou canst at thine own time and pleasure rid and deliver thy self from under the bondage of thine own tyrannizing corruption, suffer not thine heart to be puffed up with such a deceiving thought : if thou so think, thou deceivest thy self exceedingly, and thou art even running on in the way to thine own everlasting perdition, thy corruption is strong and powerful in thee, and holds thee in a miserable bondage, and thou going on with this conceit, that thou canst at thine own time and pleasure, winde thy self from under the power of it ; thy corruption gathers more strength, and holds thee faster under the power of it ; for custome and continuance in sinne adds strength to it ; It dulls the minde, it hardens the heart, and as the Prophet speaks, *Jer. 13. 23.* *It is as easie for the black Moore to change his skinne, or the Leopard his spots, as for one to do good that is accustomed to do evil.* And therefore deceive not thy self, fancy not to thy self that thou canst, at thine own time, get thy self from under the power of thine own tyrannizing corruption, and so neglect the timely use of the means that serve to that purpose ; hearing, reading, and meditating in the Word of God, Prayer, and other holy means that serve for thy calling and conversion, and for thy deliverance from under the bondage of sinne.

Come we now to the last part of the Verse, *That we should serve in newnesse of Spirit, and not in the oldnesse of the letter.* In these words the Apostle puts down the end of deliverance from the Law, and makes known, that himself and other true believers were delivered from it to this end, that they should serve the Lord in newnesse of Spirit, even in true holinesse wrought in them by the Spirit, and coming from them as they were sanctified, and not in outward holinesse, and such as is onely taught by the ministry of the Law, and may come from men that are yet in their old corruption : that is the purpose of the Apostle in these words.

In the first place note we, that the Apostle here useth this word (*serve*) the Original is δουλεύειν, and he saith, *that we should serve in Newnesse of Spirit, that we should serve the Lord in true holiness.* Hence it is clear,

*Doctrine 4.*  
Divine, religi-  
ous, holy ser-  
vice belongs  
to the Lord.

That divine, religious, and holy service belongs to the Lord, not onely divine worship, but also divine and religious service is due to the Lord, yea, it is due to him alone, and to no other, either Saint or Angel. The Papists make this distinction of religious worship; they say there be two degrees of it ; one an higher, which they call λατρεία, worship, whereby God himself is worshipped; and another lower, which they call δουλεία, service, whereby the Angels and Saints are to be worshipped ; who (say they) being glorified in heaven, are in special favour with God ; and so they give to them adoration, and invocation.

A Popish di-  
stinction con-  
futed.

This distinction is absurd and foolish ; for though there be a worship proper to God alone, and incommunicable to any creature, yet λατρεία doth not alwayes signifie that, neither doth δουλεία so properly agree to creatures, as that it is never given to God : for the Apostle commonly calls himself δουλὸς ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ a servant of Jesus Christ. And here he teacheth us to yield to God δουλείαν, service. And *Rom. 14. 18.* the Apostle saith, *Whosoever in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable unto God, and approved of men.* The same Original word is there used that here we have ; and therefore that Popish distinction between worship and service, cannot stand with the truth and plain evidence of the Word of God.

In the next place observe we that the Apostle saith not barely, *that we should serve the Lord,* but he further expresth wherein, namely, *in newnesse of Spirit,* that is, in true holinesse, wrought in himself and other true beleivers, and coming from them as they have in them the Spirit of grace. Hence we are given to understand,

That



That true Believers, even as many as hold themselves freed from the rigour and curse of the Law, they are to serve the Lord, and to yeeld obedience to him in true holinesse both of heart and life, even in true and spiritual holinesse, such as comes from a renewed heart and sanctified soul are they to serve the Lord; they are to yeeld to the Lord new obedience and spiritual service both in heart and life, even new and spiritual thoughts, words, and actions. For this we have further evidence and testimony of Scripture. *Ezek. 36. 26, 27.* the Lord saith, *He would give his people a new heart and a new Spirit: he would put his Spirit within them, and take away the stony heart out of their body, and give them a heart of flesh, and cause them to walk in his Statutes, and keep his Judgements, and do them.* As if he had said, Having given you a new heart, and having renewed you by my Spirit, you shall then yeeld to me new obedience, and spiritual service, both in heart and life. *Rom. 12. 1.* The Apostle thus exhorts the true believing Romans, *I beseech you Brethren, by the sweet mercies of God, that you give up your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which* (saith he) *is your reasonable and spiritual serving of God.*

*Doctrine 5.*  
True believers  
are to serve the  
Lord in true  
and spiritual  
holinesse both  
of heart and  
life.  
*Ezech. 36. 26,  
27.*

And hence it is that true believers are often called on in Scripture, and exhorted to a new course of life, and to yeeld to the Lord new thoughts, new words, and new actions, as *1 Cor. 5. 17.* *If any man be in Christ, let him be a new creature.* And *Ephes. 4. 22, 23, 24.* the Apostle thus exhorts the Ephesians, That they should cast off, concerning the conversation in times past, the old man, which is corrupt through the deceivable lusts, *Vers. 23.* And be renewed in the Spirit of your minde, *Vers. 24.* And put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holinesse. And to this purpose I might cite many more testimonies, all driving to this issue, and urging this duty on true believers, that they are to yeeld to the Lord, new obedience and spiritual service, both in heart and life: and the reason of this is given by Christ, *Joh. 4. 24.* *God is a Spirit, and he must have worship and service, suitable and agreeable to his nature true worshippers, and such as truly serve God, must worship and serve him in Spirit and Truth.* They must yeeld to him spiritual worship and service.

And therefore this must needs be held to be a duty of all true Believers, even of as many as would serve the Lord as they ought, that they are to yeeld to him new obedience, and spiritual service both in heart and life.

Before I come to make use of this, I hold it needful to stand a little further on it, that we may better conceive it, and that it may be more profitable to us: I will therefore,

First, shew the ground of that true spiritual service that is to be yeelded to God.

Secondly, what it is.

Thirdly, the kinds of it, and then come to make use of the doctrine.

For the First. The ground of true spiritual service of God, is a true knowledge of God, as he hath revealed himself in his Word; to know God to be infinite in in power, wisdom, justice, mercy, holinesse, goodnesse, &c. and that he is a Beholder and a Judge of all secrets, and will render to every man according to his works. This is the very root and ground of all sound, hearty, and sincere affection in the service of God. We read, *Dan. 9. 4.* Daniel thus prayed, *O Lord God* (saith he) *which art great and fearful, and keepest covenant and mercy toward them which love thee, and toward them which keep thy Commandments.*

Where we may observe, that Daniel first rightly conceives the greatnesse and goodnesse of God, and from thence proceeds an hearty and humble confession of his sins, and the sins of the people: and indeed, God cannot be served in Spirit and Truth, of them of whom he is not known in some measure by the light of his Word. It is not possible that a man should either trust or hope in God, or love him, or fear, or serve him as he ought, when he knowes him not.

*"It is his mercy, love, goodnesse, truth, power, justice, and such like, that causeth*

*"men*

1. The ground  
of true spiri-  
tual service  
of God.

*Note.*



“men to trust, hope, love, fear and serve God as they ought: and therefore to know God truly, as he is set forth in his Word, is the ground of the true, sound, and spiritual service of God.

2. What the true spiritual service of God is.

Now what true spiritual service of God is, thus we are to conceive it. It is a true acknowledgment of Gods power, justice, mercy and goodnesse, with an inward and sincere affection in some proportion agreeable to that acknowledgment: for as we know by the light of the Word, that God is just, good, and omnipotent: so must we in his service, in our hearts acknowledg him so to be, and be affected towards him accordingly in all duties of Gods service: with the outward work, must go inward and good affections, and then we serve God with spiritual service; and this is that the Lord in all times hath called for: Thorowout the Book of God we are taught, to serve God in purenesse of Spirit, in simplicity and soundnesse of heart; and that is spiritual service of God.

3. The kinds of the service of God.

Now in the third place, for the kindes of this service: they are two; either it is such as is immediately performed to God, as in all actions of religious worship, in hearing, in speaking the Word of God, in Prayer, in receiving the Sacraments, and the like. Or such as is mediately offered up to God, as in the duties of love, mercy, equity, and justice to men; for therein also we serve God. *Coloss. 3. 24.* the *Apostle* saith, that *Servants in doing service to their Masters in singlenesse of heart, they serve the Lord Christ*. Thus then conceive we the doctrine.

True believers are to yield to the Lord new obedience and spiritual service, both in heart and life, that is, they are to know and acknowledg God as he is made known in his Word, even a God of infinite power, goodnesse, mercy, truth and justice, and to serve him in truth of heart and inward affection answerable to that acknowledgement, both in every action of his divine worship, and in every duty of love, mercy, equity, and justice, they perform to their Brethren.

Use 1.  
The Popish Doctrine of *Opus operatum*, overturned.

This being a truth, it overturns that Popish doctrine of *Opus operatum*. The Papists teach, that the very work done in any kind of Gods service, is sufficient that a man may truly serve God, if he do a duty commanded of God, though he never think of God, nor have any good motion in his mind, in the act and time of doing it; that is their doctrine: which is a foul and grosse error, and cannot stand with the truth now delivered. I leave it, and for use of the point, to our selves,

Use 2.  
That many come far short of yeelding that true service to the Lord, which they owe unto him, discovered.

Is it so, that true Believers are to yeeld to the Lord, new obedience and spiritual service, both in heart and life, they are to know and acknowledge God as he himself is made known in his Word, to serve him in truth and soundnesse of heart, both in the duties of piety towards God, and in the duties of love towards men. Oh then, how far short are many in the world, that would be held true believers, from that true service they owe to the Lord? Do not many content themselves with a formal service of God? Do they not think they do God high service, if they come to the Church, hear the Word, and pray?

And will they not brag of it, and say they serve God duly and truly every day Morning and Evening? They say their prayers, though (God knowes) without inward touch of heart, without any reverence of the great and glorious Majestic of God, never acknowledging him to be a God of infinite power, goodnesse, mercy, truth and justice. And is it not thus with most men in doing the duties of love, mercy, equity, and justice to their Brethren? Do they perform those duties to men in conscience to God, knowing him to be a God of infinite wisdom, power, justice, mercy, and goodnesse, and acknowledging him so to be, and doing those good things in truth of heart, and soundnesse of inward affection, answerable to that acknowledgement? Nay, do not men content themselves in living civilly with others, and please themselves exceedingly, in that they perform duties of love, mercy, equity, and justice to their Brethren, after  
a civil



a civil honeſt faſhion? Yea, do they not ſtand on it, that they are religious, and they are Gods ſervants, and who dare ſay nay to it?

Will you ſay that they are not religious, and that they are not Gods ſervants, becauſe they are not ſo precise as haply you are? They will needs be held religious and Gods ſervants, and yet many of them are ſuch devout and religious perſons, as thoſe Women were, *Act. 13. 50.* who raiſed perſecution againſt *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and expelled them out of their Coaſts.

Too many ſuch religious perſons there be in the world, that raiſe trouble againſt their Miniſters, vexe them, and grieve them, and do what they can to diſhearten them, and to weary them out of their lives; ſuch perſons thinking that they are Gods ſervants, deceive themſelves, they are far ſhort of that Religion, and that ſpiritual ſervice they owe to the Lord.

• And know it for a truth, thou that ſerveſt God for faſhion, thou that art ignorant, and knoweſt not God, as he hath revealed himſelf in his Word; or at leaſt doſt not acknowledge him to be a God of infinite wiſdome, power, goodneſſe, mercy, and juſtice, and ſo liveſt onely a civil honeſt life, and doeſt good duties onely of form and faſhion, that an hypocrite, whoſe portion is hell fire, is as good a ſervant of God as thou yet art, and ſhall as ſoon go to heaven as thou ſhalt, unleſſe thou alter thy courſe; and therefore deceive not thy ſelf. If thou hold thy ſelf a true ſervant of God, thou muſt yeeld to him new obedience and ſpiritual ſervice. And let every one take notice of the duty now delivered: and if thou perſwade thy ſelf thou art a true ſervant of God, then learn thy dutie: Thou art to ſerve the LORD in Spirit and Truth: thou art to know God as he hath made himſelf known in his Word, and thou art to acknowledge him in all thy wayes. *Prov. 3. 6.* Thou art to acknowledge him to be a God of Infinite power, wiſdome, goodneſſe, mercy, truth and juſtice, and to ſerve him in truth of heart, and ſoundneſſe of inward affection, answerable to that acknowledgment, in all the duties of piety towards his holy Maſteſſe, and in all the duties of love, mercy, equity, and juſtice towards Men. If thou ſo ſerve the Lord, then doſt thou ſerve him in newneſſe of Spirit, even in true ſpiritual holineſſe; and that will be pleaſing to the Lord, and that alone will bring comfort and peace to thine own ſoul.

In the next place obſerve we, that the Apoſtle expreſſing wherein true Believers are to ſerve the Lord; thus he ſpeaks, he ſets it down in theſe termes, (*In newneſſe of Spirit:*) he ſaith not in newneſſe of life, or in true ſpiritual holineſſe, but *in newneſſe of Spirit*: thereby giving us to know, whence new obedience, and true ſpiritual holineſſe that true Believers are to yeeld to the Lord, comes, as namely, that it comes from the Spirit of grace and ſanctification; and the point hence further offered, is this;

Obſerv.

That new obedience and true holineſſe comes from the Spirit of God, it proceeds from the Spirit of grace and ſanctification, that men yeeld to the Lord new obedience and true holineſſe, it is the work of his Spirit in them; and ſo far forth as men are wrought on, and renewed by the Spirit of God, ſo far they yeeld to the Lord new obedience and true holineſſe, and what good ſoever is in men, and whatſoever comes from them, that is truly good and holy, it comes from the Spirit of God. This truth is cleer in many places of Scripture, *Gal. 5. 22.* *The fruit of the Spirit, ſaith the Apoſtle, is love, joy, peace, long ſuffering, gentleneſſe, goodneſſe, faith, meekneſſe, temperance:* every good affection, and every good and holy action is a fruit of the Spirit: And to this purpoſe that place in *Ezek. 36. 27.* is cleer. The Lord ſaith, *I will put my Spirit within you and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, and ye ſhall keep my judgments, and do them.* *2 Cor. 3. 18.* the Apoſtle ſaith, *We are changed into the Image of God, from glory to glory, and that by the Spirit of the Lord,* cleering and confirming this truth;

Doctrine 6.  
New obedience and true holineſſe is the work of Gods Spirit in men.

That new obedience and true holineſſe comes from the Spirit of God, and that men have any dram of true holineſſe in them, or are able to practiſe it in any meaſure, it is only of the Spirit of grace and ſanctification. And the ground  
F of



Reason.

of this is that of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 3. 5. Of our selves we are not able to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God. Men know not God with holy knowledge, but as they are enlightened by the Spirit of God. 1 Cor. 12. 3. The Apostle saith, *No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, no man can acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the Lord of life and glory, but by the holy Ghost.* Let a man have never so good a wit, and be indued with never so excellent parts of nature, yet he knowes not God, neither can know him, nor the things of God, but as he is enlightened by the Spirit; much lesse can he love God, or yeeld obedience and true spiritual service to him, unlesse he be wrought on by the Spirit of God. Therefore new obedience and true holinesse comes only from the Spirit of God. If men have any goodnesse or holinesse in them, or be able to practise it in any measure, it is onely the work of the Spirit of grace and sanctification.

Use 1.

None but such as have the Spirit of grace can yeeld new obedience to God.

Let us take notice of this to this purpose. First, this makes known to us, that none but such as have the Spirit of grace and sanctification, can possibly yeeld new obedience and true holinesse to the Lord; a man that is yet in his natural state and condition, may have a shew of holinesse, and may do things good in themselves, and may please himself in the doing of them; but as they are done by him, they are no part of true and holy obedience, and in doing of them he doth not please the Lord; it is no true holinesse, nor pleasing to God, that hath not the stamp of the Spirit on it, and comes not from the Spirit of grace and sanctification.

Use 2.

We are to give the praise and glory of that goodnesse and holinesse we have in us, to the Lord.

Again, this Truth must teach us in the second place thus much: if we have any goodnesse, any true holinesse in us, we are to give the glory and praise of that to whom it belongs, namely, to the Lord, and to the working of his Spirit. Hast thou thy mind framed to good thoughts, and to good and holy meditations, and thine heart to good affections and holy desires, and art thou able to practise the duties of holinesse in some measure? Give the whole praise and glory of that work to the Lord, and to the working of his holy Spirit. By nature thou hast no better thoughts, affections, nor actions, then other men; and if now thy mind and heart be taken up with new and holy thoughts, blesse the Lord for it, and acknowledg the gracious and good work of his Spirit in thee, and take heed that in this case thou give not too much to the outward instruments, gaze not too much on the excellency of the gifts of any that hath been a means to do thee good, and to work grace and goodnesse in thee, lest so thou give part of the glory to the instrument; but ever have an eye on the Lord who hath vouchsafed to thee the working of his Spirit, whose only work it hath been, and remember, that Paul or Apollos, such or such Ministers, are but Ministers of God, by whom thou hast been wrought on, 1 Cor. 3. 5. blesse God for them, but give him alone all the glory, and all the praise of that work; to him of right it belongs.

Further observe we, that the Apostle here makes an opposition between newnesse of Spirit, and the oldnesse of the Letter: he saith, *That we should serve in newnesse of Spirit, and not in the oldnesse of the Letter.* He opposeth new holinesse and old, namely, such as may come from men as yet in their old corruption. Hence note we,

Doctrine 7.

New obedience and old cannot stand together.

That new holinesse and old cannot stand together, new obedience that favours of a new heart and a sanctified soul, and old obedience, that is, such as favours of the old man, and of the corruption of nature, and comes onely from that corruption. These two cannot sort and settle together. And if this be a truth, as it were easie to make it good by plain evidence of Scripture, surely then it cannot be that they serve God.

Use.

They that follow the fashions of the world are not the servants of God.

That they are not the servants of God, that give themselves to follow the fashions of the world, Rom. 12. 1. the Apostle saith, *Give up your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God:* and, Vers. 2, he subjoynes, *Fashion not your selves like unto this world, but be ye changed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good Will of God, and acceptable, and perfect.*

In



In the last place observe we, that the *Apostle* here opposeth the *Spirit* and *Letter*, meaning by the *Letter* (as I have shewed) the ministry of the Law, which of it self is a dead Letter: the point hence is this, *Observ.*

That the Law of God, and indeed the whole Word of God, without the Spirit, is but a dead Letter. The Ministry and preaching of man, not accompanied with the work of the Spirit of God, is but a dead Letter, it is not able to work grace and faith, or any true holiness at all: and therefore, *Psal. 119. David* often prayed to the Lord, that he would *teach him, and give him understanding.* Vers. 33, 34. and that he would *open his eyes, that he might see the wonders of his Law,* Vers. 18. *Ephes. 1. 17, 18.* The *Apostle* thus prayed for the Ephesians, *That the Spirit of wisdom and revelation might be given unto them, and that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened:* and *2 Cor. 4. 6.* the *Apostle* saith, that God by the same Almighty power, by which he brought light out of darkness at first, by the same power he shines in the hearts of true Believers, and gives them light and true saving knowledge in the face of Jesus Christ, clearing and confirming this Truth, That the Ministry and preaching of the Word, being not accompanied by the work of the Spirit, is but a dead Letter, and not able to work grace and true holiness; and the reason is this, *Doctrine 8.*

The Lord hath reserved that as a *Prerogative* proper and peculiar to himself, to make men understand, know and believe the Doctrine of his Word: and therefore the *Apostle* saith, *1 Cor. 3. 7.* *PAUL may plant, APOLLOS may water, but GOD alone gives the increase:* he alone makes the doctrine of his Word profitable. *Reason.*

We read, that the Word of God it self converts, enlightens, gives wisdom and understanding, and therefore it is not a dead Letter, without the Spirit. *Object.*

The Word of God (indeed) converts, enlightens, gives wisdom and understanding; yet only as an instrument, and that not as any Physical instrument, having virtue in it self, but as an instrument signifying and testifying that which the Spirit of God doth inwardly work: and so this remains still a truth, that the ministry of the Word, not accompanied with the work of the Spirit, is but a dead Letter, it is not able to work grace and true holiness. *Ans.*

And first this may serve to arme and strengthen us against offence, in regard of this, that men are not wrought on by the plain evidence and truth of the Word of God; we are not to stumble at this, that where the Word is truly and faithfully preached, there some continue in their hardness and sins, and are vile and notorious sinners, unreformed in their hearts and lives, yea make a mocke at the Judgements of God, denounced justly against them for their sins: we must remember, that grace and holiness are things that God must give, and they are wrought onely by the power of the Spirit, working together with the Word. Were it not for this, the Ministers of the Word could have small comfort. But indeed *Paul* may wish himself separated from Christ for the winning of mens soules; yet shall no more be won to Christ, then it pleaseth the Father to draw, *Joh. 6. 44.* *The Spirit bloweth where he listeth;* and therefore in this respect we are not to be offended. *Use 1.*

Again, this being so, that the ministry of the Word not accompanied with the work of the Spirit, is a dead Letter. Surely then we are to come to the hearing of the Word with humble hearts, we are to lay aside all high conceit of our own wit and understanding: for *God resisteth the proud, and gives grace to the humble:* yea, we are not to rest in our reading in the Word of God, or in that we hear or learn of our Teachers, but we must be earnest with the Lord, that he would be pleased inwardly to teach us by his Spirit; and the Lord vouchsafing to accompany the ministerie of his Word to us with the inward working of his Spirit, we are to be thankful for that mercy: that is a mercy not bestowed on many. How many do we see left in ignorance, and in hardness of heart, and unreformed in their hearts and lives, who live in the same place with us, and frequent the same means of salvation that we do! It is a blessing of God to have the *Use 2.*



the Word preached to us faithfully and truly; but a double blessing is it, to have understanding hearts given us, even hearts yeelding to the truth of the Word, and to come to the saving knowledge, and comfort of the Word, that is a blessing that cannot be sufficiently prized, and in respect of that we are to break out with *David*, and say, Lord, what am I, that thou shouldest shew me such mercy! I was born and brought forth in sin, and I have lived in sin, and yet thou hast vouchsafed mercy to me above many thousands. Thus are we to meditate of the mercy of God in this respect.

## V E R S. 7.

*What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? God forbid. Nay, I knew not sin, but by the Law: For I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not lust.*



He Apostle having finished the first part of this Chapter in the Verses foregoing, and shewed how true Believers are freed and delivered from the Law: In this verse he enters on the second part of it, wherein he clears the Law from some foul blots that some might haply cast on it, and commends it, and shews the true use of it; and this he doth from this 7. Verse, to Verse 14.

The blots the *Apostle* wipes away from the Law, are two: First, that the Law should be the cause of sin; and this he propounds and takes away, *Vers. 7.* and withal he shews, that not the Law, but Sin taking occasion by the Law, wrought Concupiscence revived in him, deceived him, and slew him; for of all these he gives instance in his own person, *Vers. 8, 9, 10, 11.* And then he shews, that the Law in it self is just and holy, *Vers. 12.* The second blot the *Apostle* wipes away from the Law, is this, that the Law should be the cause of death, which he propounds and answers, *Vers. 13.*

To come to this 7. Verse, *What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? God forbid. Nay, I knew not sin, but by the Law: for I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not lust.* The *Apostle* having said, *Vers. 5.* That the motions of sins had force in the members of true Believers, to bring forth fruit to death; hereupon some were ready to charge the Law to be evil, and to lay this blot on it, that therefore the Law was sin, or the cause of sin. This foule calumny, and this grosse conclusion the *Apostle* disclaims: he meets with it in this Verse, on this manner. First, knowing the former Position to be sound and good, he provokes those that were like to cavil and to pervert that Position, to tell him what they could thereupon conclude in the first words of the Verse, *What shall we say then?* what followes on this? what shall we hereupon infer. And then secondly, he puts down that conclusion, that they in likelihood might, or, it may be, did infer by way of interrogation likewise, *Is the Law sin?* Shall we thus conclude, doth this Conclusion follow on my former Position, that therefore the Law is sin? To this he answers negatively, and generally no, and that in a phrase of detestation, as abhorring such a foul Conclusion; *God forbid.* And then to this general answer he subjoynes a further refutation of that absurd Conclusion, by an Argument from a right and proper use of the Law: that the Law is so far from being the cause of sin, that one right use of it is, to discover sin, and to make it known, insisting in his own example. *Is the Law sin? God forbid,* saith the *Apostle.* Nay, saith he, *I my self knew not sin, but by the Law:* and that he further confirms by a particular instance of his knowledge of Lust, that he himself came to the knowledge of Lust by the Law, and that he had not known Lust, except the Law had said, *Thou shalt not lust.* And so we see the general drift of the *Apostle* in this Verse.

Interpretation *What shall we say then?* These words, as I have shewed, have respect to that the



the Apostle said, *Vers. 5.* that the motions of sins which were by the Law, had force in our members to bring forth fruit unto death: and they are thus to be conceived; as if he had said, What then? What followes on that? What Conclusion shall we thereupon infer? *Is the Law sin?* by a *Metonymie* of the effect.

The Apostles meaning is this: Is the Law the cause of sin? Doth this Conclusion follow on the former Position, that the Law is the cause of sin?

*God forbid:* that is a phrase of abhorring and detestation; as if the Apostle had said, Far be it from us so to think; fie on it, it is a very absurd and grosse thing so to think; nay, or nay rather, I knew not sin, but by the Law, That phrase (*I knew not sin*) implies two things: First, this; I was ignorant of some things to be sins, which yet are sins, I knew them not, or I took no notice of them to be sins. And secondly, this; I was ignorant of the greatnesse of sin; such things as I knew to be evil by the light of nature, I did not soundly and thorowly know to be so evil as indeed they are, but by the Law, that is, by any other meanes but onely by the Law. The word (*Law*) here signifieth the moral Law of God, published by *Moses* in the ten Commandements, as appears by the instance following; *For I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not lust:* that is, I had never come to know lust to be sin, but that looking into the Law of God, I found it there expressly forbidden and condemned, the Lord in the tenth Commandement saying directly, *Thou shalt not covet;* or, *Thou shalt not lust.* And by *Lust* in this place, we are to understand both the rebellion of nature, the inclination to evil, and those first motions whereby we are stirred up to evil, and do with delight think any thing contrary to the love of God or our Neighbour, though we never give consent of Will to commit that evil: for the Apostle having but the use of reason, could not be ignorant that Concupiscence with consent of Will was sin, which the Heathen by the light of Nature did know and confesse.

Thus then briefly conceive we the meaning of the Apostle in the words of this Verse; as if he had said,

*What then? What followes on that Position, that the motions of sins which were by the Law, had force in our members to bring forth fruit unto death? What shall we thereupon infer? Doth this conclusion follow on it, That the Law is the cause of sin? Oh, no: far be it from us so to think; it were very absurd and grosse so to imagine, nay rather, this is a truth: I speak out of mine own experience, I myself was ignorant of some things to be sins, which yet were sins, and the things I knew to be evil by the light of Nature, I did not soundly know to be so evil, as indeed they are, by any other means but onely by the Moral Law of God. For example, I had never come to know that Lust, the rebellion, the inclination to evil, and those motions whereby we are stirred up to evil, and do with delight think of any thing contrary to the love of God or our neighbour, though we yeeld not consent of Will to commit that evil, were sins, but that looking into the Law of God, I found them there expressly forbidden, the Lord in the tenth Commandement saying directly, Thou shalt not covet, or, Thou shalt not lust.*

Come we now to such things as are hence to be observed. *What shall we say then? Is the Law sin?* We see, the Apostle is forced to prevent an absurd conclusion, that some were ready to infer on his former doctrine. He having delivered that the motions of sins which were by the Law, had force in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death; some were ready thereupon to conclude, that therefore the Law was the cause of sin. This the Apostle is forced to prevent and to say, *What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? Is the Law the cause of sin? God forbid.* Whence we see cleerly,

That the holy Truth of God is subject to be perverted, and to have absurd conclusions urged from it. It is no new thing, that some draw from the holy Truth of God absurd and grosse conclusions; thus was it in the Apostles time, as here we see Chap. 3. of this *Epistle*; and thus it hath been, is now, and will be to the end of the World: and therefore we are not to marvel at this, that

*Obser.*

*Doctrine 1.*  
The holy Truth of God is subject to be perverted.



*Use.*  
We are not to  
marvel that  
some force  
from the Truth  
of God absurd  
conclusions.

some pervert the holy Truth of God, and force from it absurd and grosse conclusions. For example; That one Child of God may infallibly know another, and that Repentance goeth before Faith, and the like; this is no strange thing, thus it hath been in all ages, and will be to the end of the World. The Papists they lay it as a reproach on the Truth taught in our Church, that many absurd opinions do spring up together with it. Surely they might as well, in this respect, reproach the Truth taught by the Apostle, and by the Lord himself. Is it not the Truth of God, because some do force from it absurd and grosse conclusions? Nay rather, we are to acknowledge it to be the same Truth that was taught by the *Apostle*, seeing the Devil seeks to pervert it, as he did in old time: the Devil is still like himself, and he labours now as much as ever, nay more, because he is nearer to his end, to corrupt men, to sow errors, and to force from the holy Truth of God many absurd and grosse conclusions. And the consideration of this may strengthen us against offence, in regard of many damnable errors and heresies that sprout up together with the preaching of the sound and holy Truth of God.

Now in that the *Apostle* confutes that absurd conclusion, That the Law should be the cause of sin, and saith, *What shall we say then? is the Law sin? is the Law the cause of sin? God forbid:* Note we briefly,

*Doctrine 2.*  
The Law is not  
the cause of  
sin.

*Use.*  
How the Pa-  
pists wrong the  
Doctrine of  
the Gospel.

That the Law is not the cause of sin: indeed sin takes occasion by the Law, as Verse next, to be stirring, and to break out: but yet it is a wrong to the Law, and an imputation falsely cast upon it, to say that it is the proper cause of sin: and so is it a wrong to the Gospel, to say, as the Papists do, that it is a Doctrine dispossessing mens hearts of all true love of God and men, and setting open a gap to all loosenesse of life; for so they charge the Doctrine of Gods free Grace and free Justification of a sinner to be. This is a mere slander. Indeed, so great is the corruption of mans degenerate nature, that many *turn the Grace of God into wantonnesse*: but that is but an accidental event, no proper effect of Gods free Grace.

*Observ.*

In the next place observe we, that the *Apostle* further confuting that absurd Conclusion, that the Law should be the cause of sin, he saith, *Nay, I knew not sin, but by the Law.* I knew not some things to be sins, but onely by the Law. Hence we are given to understand thus much,

*Doctrine 3.*  
Men come to  
sound know-  
ledge of sin,  
onely by the  
Law of God.

That by the Law of God only, the summe whereof is in the ten Commandements, men come to sound knowledge of sin; men come to know that to be sin, which indeed is sin, and sin to be so foul and haynous as it is, onely by the Law of God: And to this purpose the *Apostle* speaks plainly, *Rom. 3. 20. By the Law cometh the knowledge of sin:* and, *Gal. 3. 19.* he saith, *The Law was added,* meaning the *Decalogue*, or ten Commandements, *because of transgression.* That Law serves to discover sin, and the punishment of it, and for the sound convincing of men, touching their sins, and that Law onely doth this: for howsoever the Law of Nature do sometimes discover sin, as we see in *Abimelech*, *Gen. 20. 9.* and we have example of it in other of the Heathen, yet that Law being much weakened by the corruption of nature, it cannot thorowly discover sin, nor the wrath of God due to sin; only the Moral Law of God doth soundly and thorowly discover sin, and men come to the sound and thorow-knowledge of sin, onely by that Law. And the reason is this;

That Law only is the perfect rule of righteousness, and is most pure and free from all corruption, howsoever it may have corrupt glosses and interpretations fastened upon it, as it had by the Scribes and Pharisees; yet *in it self it is pure and perfect*, *Psal. 19. 7, 8.* and therefore it doth perfectly discover sin, and men come to the sound and thorow-knowledge of sin, only by that Law.

*Use 1.*  
The knowledg  
of Gods Law  
is necessary.

Now this first serves to prove, that the Doctrine and knowledg of the Law of God (the sum whereof we have in the ten Commandements) is necessary; it is needful that the Law of God be taught, and made known to us, and it is needful that we learn the Law of God, and that we should come to the know-  
ledge



ledg of it : for why ? It is the Law of God onely, that gives us a true sight of sinne, and by that alone we come to a sound and thorow knowledg of sinne ; and therefore it is needful that we learn and know it, and to that end we are carefully to attend on the means that may bring us to the understanding and knowledg of it ; and we are with *David* to pray to the Lord, that he would *teach us, and give us understanding, and open our eyes, that we may see the wonders of his Law.*

Again, is it so, that men come to a sound and thorow knowledg of sinne ; onely by the Law of God ? Surely then, if we would soundly and thorowly know sinne, if we would know what things are sins, and how foul, ugly, and monstrous a thing sinne is, we must look into the Book of God, and not rest in our own sense and understanding ; we must not judge of sinne by the crooked rule of our own reason : for this is that which deceives many, they judge of sinne by their own corrupt sense and reason. For example ; they think it nothing to take the Name of God into their mouthes at every turn, and to say, Oh God ! O Lord ! O Jesus ! Gods sony ! and the like. They think their words are but winde, and that it is nothing to open their mouthes against such as fear God, and to revile and to reproach them, and they think it nothing to lye for advantage, and to swear by faith or troth, and that it is a sign of a base minde to put up an injury, *which indeed is a mans glory, Prov. 19. 11.* with a thousand like. And hence it is that men put fair names on foul sins, and call Covetousnesse, Good husbandry ; Pride, Comelineffe ; and Drunkennesse, Good fellowship, and such like.

Thus men deceive themselves, in judging of sinne by their own sense and reason. We must learn, not to rest in our own sense and reason touching sin ; but we are to look into the Book of God, and to examine our hearts and lives by the Law of God published in his Word, the sum whereof we have in the ten Commandements ; and we shall thereby finde thousands of things to be sins, which we never thought to be so, yea, thereby we shall find out our special sins ; and secret sins, and that every swarving from the Law of God, though it be but in the least want of that the Law requireth, to be sin, 1 *Job. 3. 4.* And therefore by that we are to examine our selves, and especially by the first and last Commandements of the Law. The first, shewing the first motions of our hearts against God. And the last, shewing the first motions of our hearts against our Neighbour (though we yield not consent of will to them) to be evil.

We are further to mark, that the *Apostle* saith not thus, *Is the Law sinne ? God forbid.* Nay, the Law discovers sinne, or sinne is made known by the Law : but he gives instance in himself, and he saith, *I knew not sin, but by the Law.* As if he had said, That I speak, I speak out of mine own experience, even *I my self knew not sin, but by the Law*, that is, I my self came to the knowledg of sinne by the Law. From this manner of speaking, the *Apostle* thus insisting in his own example, and speaking out of his own experience, two things are offered to our consideration ; I will speak of them in order.

The first is this : That it is an excellent thing, when a Teacher can speak out of his own experience touching sinne, and touching matters of faith and salvation ; he is the best Teacher, that is able to speak of those things out of his own own experience ; he is the fittest to admonish, to reprove, and to comfort others, that can deliver the Word of Instruction, Admonition, and Comfort, out of his own experience. Read *Psal. 51. 12, 13.* We there finde, that *David* desired the Lord to restore to him the joy of his salvation, and to stablish him with his free Spirit, and then he would teach others the way to finde the like comfort and heavenly joy : *Then (saith he) shall I teach thy wayes unto the wicked, and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Heb. 5. 2.* It is said, that the high Priest under the Law, having experience of infirmities in himself, was fitter to have compassion on the people, & thereby was able sufficiently to have compassion on them that were ignorant, and were out of the way, because that he also is compassed with

*Use 2.*  
We are to judge of sin onely by the Word of God.

*Observ.*

*Doctrine 4.*  
He is the best Teacher, that can speak out of his own experience.



with infirmities. *Matth. 5. 19.* faith Christ, *Whosoever shall observe and teach the Commandements of God, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of heaven.* Where we see, that he puts observing or doing, before teaching: by that order of the words plainly pointing out this Truth; That he is the fittest to teach others, who himself is a doer of that he teacheth, and can teach out of experience. The reasons of this truth are these:

Reason 1.

First, experience of the efficacy, power, and working of the VVord in a mans own particular, in his own soul, is the best Commentary, and the best means for the right understanding of the VVord; and he that feels the power and fruit of the VVord in himself, even in his own soul, he is best able to open the meaning of it, and to apply it to others, and is the fittest and best Teacher.

2.

Again, when a man is able to speak out of his own experience, and to deliver Instruction, Admonition, Counsel or Comfort, as a thing whereof himself hath had experience, it is a special means to confirm that which is delivered, and to work it into the mindes, and to seat and settle it on the hearts of the hearers: and therefore (doubtlesse) he is the best Teacher, that is able to deliver the holy Truth of God for Instruction or Comfort, out of his own experience. These two cautions being duely observed; First, that he be sure that he deliver the Truth of God, and not his own conceit. And secondly, that he deliver it in wisdom, with due consideration of necessary circumstances of time, place, and person, He that so delivers the holy Truth of God out of his own experience, without question is the best Teacher.

Use 1.

Ministers are to labour for experience of that they teach to others in themselves.

This ought to stirre up all Ministers of the Word, howsoever they seek for other helps of Arts and Tongues, which indeed are excellent things, and of special use in teaching, and are not to be held, as some foolishly think, *Antichristian*, or needlesse, they are of special good use, and are to be sought after, to make ministers fit for their calling. But I say, howsoever they are to seek for such helps, yet especially are they to labour for experience of that in themselves, which they teach to others, even to labour to have a true feeling of that Truth and of those comforts of the Word in themselves, in their own soules which they publish and make known to others: So they may be fitter to deliver the Truth of God, and the sweet and heavenly comforts of the Word, with profit to the People of God.

Use 2.

The word of Counsel, Admonition, Instruction, and Comfort, is most effectual, coming from experience.

Yea, the Truth now delivered, is of use to private persons. Wouldst thou that art a private person, be most fit to counsel, to admonish, to instruct, and comfort others, as occasion is offered? Then labour thou to speak the word of Counsel, of Instruction, of Admonition, of Comfort, out of thine own feeling, and out of thine own experience: and if thou so speak, no doubt, thy speech will be more effectual, and do more good then the most eloquent that can be, not coming from experience. Those that reprove eloquently, they pierce not the heart, and those that comfort with fine eloquent speeches, comfort little or nothing, when their speeches come not from a feeling and experience of that they speak in their own hearts.

If thou be able to comfort others with the comforts wherewith thy self hast been comforted of God, *2 Cor. 1. 4.* and canst truly use the words of David, *Psal. 66. 16.* *Come and hearken, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul,* to my poor soul; I my self was thus or thus distressed, and this course I took, and the Lord vouchsafed me this comfort; no doubt thy speech will finde better entrance, and prevail more then the most witty and eloquent Oration of the best Orator wanting experience.

And therefore if thou wouldst be a most fit Counsellor, a most fit Instructor, a most fit Comforter of others, labour thou to speak out of thine own experience, and to feel the power and fruit of that thou speakest in thine own soul.

The second thing offered from this manner of speech the Apostle here useth,

*I knew*



*I knew not sin but by the Law:* I came to know sin by the Law: The Law brought me, even my self, to the knowledge of sin, *is this,*

That men must come to the knowledge of sin in themselves, by the Law of God, and by the Word of God: and they onely profitably hear or read the Word of God discovering sin, that are thereby brought to a knowledge of their own sins, and the greatnesse of them, and what they have deserved by them, and to acknowledg them; we have the examples of many to this purpose in the Word of God, who have been brought to a knowledge and sight of their own particular sins, by hearing or reading the Word of God. *2 Sam. 12.* we read, that *Nathan* coming to *David*, and doing the office of a Prophet, and delivering to him the Word of the Lord, and that message the Lord had put into his mouth, *David* was thereby brought to the knowledge and sight of his particular sins, and to an acknowledgment of them, *Vers. 13.* *Then DAVID said unto NATHAN, I have sinned against the Lord.* And so the Jews, *Act. 2.* *Peter* preaching unto them, and applying the Word close to their hearts, the Text saith, *Vers. 37.* *When they heard it, they were pricked in their hearts,* they were brought to a true sight, and to a true and lively sense of their particular sins, *and they cryed out, Men and brethren, what shall we do?* *2 King. 22. 11.* we read, that when good King *Josiah* heard the Word of God read before him, he rent his Cloathes: and *Vers. 19.* it is testified of him, that *his heart did melt, and he humbled himself before the Lord.* And to this purpose we have the example of the *Ninevites* in *Jonah 3.* who at the preaching of *Jonah* were brought to a sight of their sins, and to an acknowledgment of them.

*Doctrine 5.*  
They onely profitably hear or read the Word of God discovering sin, that are thereby brought to a true sight of their own sins.

These examples do sufficiently cleer the point; That men must come to the knowledge of sin in themselves, by the Law, and by the Word of God; and then onely they profitably hear or read the Word of God discovering sin, when they thereby are brought to a sight and knowledge of their particular sins.

The reasons of this truth are first, this, The Word of God discovering sin, is written to that end, that men should thereby take notice of their particular sins, and come to acknowledge them.

*Reasons. 1.*

Again, secondly, unlesse men come to a knowledge of sin in themselves, and to a sight of their own particular sins, they will never be truly humbled, nor find themselves to stand in that need of Christ that indeed they do. And therefore it must needs be held a certain truth, that men are to come to the knowledge of sin in themselves, by the Law, and by the Word of God: and then onely men hear or read the Word of God discovering sin, with profit, when they are thereby brought to a knowledge of their own particular sins, the greatnesse of them, and what they have deserved by them, and to an acknowledgement of them.

2.

And this being a Truth, it discovereth to us, that many are unprofitable Hearers and Readers of the Word of God.

*Use.*

That many are unprofitable hearers of the Word of God, discovered.

How many, I beseech you, be there that are far from profiting by the Word of God in this manner? how many be there that take no notice of their own particular sins by the Word discovering sin? Nay, are there not many, that though their sins be never so plainly discovered before them, by the ministry of the Word, yet they take no notice of them at all, much lesse are brought to acknowledge them; as Garishnesse in apparel, how often hath it been made known to be a foule and grievous sin; and yet where is any that are guilty of that sin that take notice of it, and acknowledge it to be a sin in themselves? So I might insist in Drunkenesse, in Whoredome, in Sabbath-breaking, and in Common swearing: these sins have been often discovered by the Ministry of the Word; and yet where is almost any that take notice of them, and are brought to acknowledge them in themselves? Nay, do not many, as we use to speak, set a good face on the matter, and out-face the ministry of the Word? and if at any time they take some little notice of these sins in themselves, yet then they seek to extenuate them, and to justify them, and to stand out in defence of them,



them, yea, to quarrel with the affection of the Teacher, that he speaks not out of love; that he is too rigorous, and speaks of nothing but damnation, and the like.

Surely such persons are far from profiting by the Word discovering sin, nay, they shew themselves to be gracelesse, and that they have no dram of grace or goodnesse in them, they are like wicked *Ahab*, of whom we read, *1 King. 21.* and *Chap. 22.* That he professed he took *Elijah* and *Michaiah* the holy Prophets of the Lord for his enemies. And so they professe they take the Ministers of the VVord for their enemies, and they wish ill to them, because they tell them of their sins, and lay their sins before them.

It is a note of a good heart, to be willing to hear of sin, and to be justly reprov'd for it, as *DAVID* said, *Psal. 141. 5.* *Let the righteous smite me, for that is a benefit: and let him reprove me, and it shall be a precious oyl that shall not break mine head.* And a good man or woman likes those Sermons best, that bring them to the knowledg, sense and feeling of sin in themselves; and if thou be so far from taking notice of thine own sin by the ministry of the VVord discovering sin, as that thou dost wrangle and quarrel with those that lay thy sins before thee, it is a note of a wicked and gracelesse heart, and that thou art yet in the gall of bitternesse, and in the bond of iniquity.

Learn we then our duty, learn we to take notice of sin in our selves, by the VVord of God discovering sin. Then onely we hear or read the VVord of God discovering sin, with profit, when we take notice of sin in our selves, and are thereby brought to a sight of our own particular sins. *Note.* “*And know we thus much further, That the first step to grace, and the beginning of true conversion, is to see thine own sins in particular, and the ugliness of them, and what thou hast deserved by them: and till thou see that, thou shalt never come to be truly humbled for them.*”

And again, if thou be not brought to a sight of thine own particular sins, by the VVord of God discovering sin, certainly the Lord will one day bring thee to a sight of them, by his punishing hand, he will one day reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thee, *Psal. 50. 21.* And then thou shalt finde that the Devil will roare against thee, he will then set before thee the greatnesse of thy sinnes, and the curse of the Law, and the horror of Gods judgments, and a thousand to one, plunge thy soul into the gulf of fearful desperation.

If then thou wouldst make it good to the comfort of thine own soul, that thou art entred into the way of grace and salvation; and if thou wouldst not, by deferring to take notice of thy particular sins by the VVord of God discovering sinne, provoke the Lord to come against thee with his punishing hand, & so to awake thy dead heart and seared conscience, and to set thy sins in order before thee, and suffer the Devil to rore against thee, to set before thee the greatnesse of thy sins, and the curse of the Law, the horror of Gods Judgments, and plunge thy soul into the gulf of fearful desperation; then learn thou by the ministry of the VVord, now sounding in thine ears, and discovering sin, to take notice of sin in thy self, and to come to the knowledge of thine own particular sins, that so thou mayest be truly humbled for them, and finde mercy, pardon and forgiveness of them at the hands of the Lord.

Come we now to the last words of this Verse, *I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not lust.* In which words (as before I shewed) the *Apostle* confirms it, that he knew not sinne, but by the Law, by particular instance of his knowledg of *Lust*, as that he knew not *Lust* to be sinne, but by the Law, that he had never come to know the rebellion of his nature, and the first motions rising thence in his mind, to be sins, had not the Law made them known to him to be so.

Now then observe we who it was that was thus ignorant touching Lust, who it was that knew not Lust to be sin, till he came to look into the Law of God, there



there to finde it forbidden and condemned; even the holy Apostle Paul, a man of excellent knowledge and gifts, a learned Pharisee, and one that, before his conversion, was brought up at the feet of GAMALIEL, and instructed according to the perfect manner of the Fathers, and was zealous towards God, as himself witnesseth, *Act. 22. 3.* and yet he saith, *He knew not Lust to be sinne, but by the Law.* Hence then we are given to understand.

That men are exceeding blind touching sin, yea even men of great knowledge, and of great understanding in other matters, and men of great learning, are notwithstanding of themselves marvellous ignorant in respect of sin, and are as blind as Beetles, in respect of the corruption of nature, and the foul and cursed fruits of that corruption that is within the heart, and in the soul, they are not able to take notice of them, they see not many foul grosse corruptions, that lurk in their hearts, to be sins, they are altogether ignorant of them. And to this purpose we have not onely the example of the Apostle in this place, but we have also the example of the Scribes and Pharisees, and the great Rabbines Doctors of the Law; though they were men of great knowledge and understanding, yet we finde they knew not many inward lusts of the heart to be sins, and therefore they thought that an outward observance and keeping of some Commandments, of themselves was sufficient, as appears plainly *Matth. 5.* in many Verses of it. Our Saviour labours there to reduce them and others to a better understanding of the Law; he saith, *Verf. 21. Ye have heard that it was said to them of the old time, thou shalt not kill: for whosoever killeth, shall be culpable of judgement. Verf. 22. But I say unto you, Whosoever is angry with his brother unadvisedly, shall be culpable of judgement, and whosoever saith unto his brother, Raca, shall be worthy to be punished by the Councill: and whosoever shall say Fool, shall be worthy to be punished with hell fire. Verf. 27. Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say, Verf. 28. unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery already with her in his heart, Verf. 33. Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thy self, but shalt perform thine oathes to the Lord. But I say unto you, Verse 34. Swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God, Verf. 35. Nor yet by the earth, for it is his foot-stool, Neither by Jerusalem; for it is the City of the great King. Verf. 36. Neither shalt thou swear by thine head, because thou canst not make one haire white or black. Verf. 37. But let your communication be Yea, yea, Nay, nay, for whatsoever is more then these, cometh of evil.*

*Doctrine 6.*  
Men of great knowledge and learning, are of themselves ignorant of many grosse corruptions that lurk in their hearts.

And not to adde any more examples, common experience shews it to be a truth, that men of great knowledge and learning, men that are expert and skilful, and very wise in other matters, yet of themselves they are blind and ignorant, in respect of the corruption of nature, and they see not many foul corruptions and lusts that are in their hearts to be sins.

And the reason of this truth is, that we finde, *Jer. 17. 9. The heart of man is deceitful and wicked above all things; who can know it? The heart of man hath in it an hidden and bottomlesse depth of self-love, and of self-deceit; and therefore though men have excellent reaching wits, yea, though they be men of great understanding and skill in other matters, yet of themselves they are not able to sound the depth of their wicked and deceitful hearts, they are not able to see their hearts to be so foul and so filthy as indeed they are.*

When Hazael was told by the Prophet Elisea, *2 King. 8. 12.* what evil he should do to the children of Israel, as that he should set their Cities on fire, and slay their young men with the sword, and dash their Infants against the stones, and rent in pieces their women with childe: *What,* saith he, *Verf. 13. Is thy servant a Dog, that I should do this great thing?* He spake it with indignation, as if he had said, *What dost thou think of me? Dost thou think that I am of so dogged a nature? Dost thou think that I have such a vile and monstrous heart within me, that I can finde in mine heart to do such things as thou tellest me?*

No,



No, no: certainly I have not of such a wicked heart within me, he could of himself see the wickednesse and corruption of his own heart, nay, he would not take notice of it, though it were told him by the Prophet.

The holy *Apostle Peter*, a man truly sanctified, could not believe his Lord and Master, the Lord Jesus, who knew his heart, and could not deceive him; yet (I say) he could not believe him, when he foretold him of his threefold denyal, he could not be perswaded there was so much wickednesse in his heart, *Matth. 26. 35.* *PETER said to him, Though I should dye with thee, yet I would not deny thee.*

Now then the heart of man being thus deceitful, that men being not able to see their hearts to be so foul as indeed they are, we may resolve on this as a certain truth, that men of great knowledge and judgement, men that are very wise and understanding in other matters, yet of themselves they are blind and ignorant in respect of the corruption of nature, and they see not many foul corruptions and sins that are in their own hearts, to be sins.

*Use.*  
It is no easie matter to spy out the lurking sins of our own hearts.

Let no man then deceive himself, let none of us think it an easie matter to find out our sins, and especially the lurking sins and corruptions of our hearts. If we so think, we deceive our selves; if men of great knowledge and understanding; if men of great learning, and of deepest insight in other matters, be blind in respect of the corruption of nature, and be not able of themselves to see many foul corruptions that are in their own hearts, to be sins; shall we think it an easie thing, to spy out the lurking sins of our hearts? No, no; our own hearts will deceive us, and tell us, they are not so foul within as they are, and the Devil will sooth us up, and make us believe we are not such sinners as indeed we are.

And hence it is that ignorant persons please themselves in a conceit, that they love God with all their hearts, and they love their Neighbour as themselves: and is it not the speech of many, that if they had lived in the dayes of Christ, they would have been far from dealing with him as the Jews did? and if they had lived in the dayes of *Queen Mary*, they would have been far from having their hands in the bloud of the holy Martyrs: nay they would rather have taken part with them against *Bonner* and *Gardener*, and the rest? Will not many tell you thus, who notwithstanding shew themselves most spiteful and malicious against them that professe the same truth the holy Martyrs did, and in whom appears the like piety and zeal?

And will not they tell you thus, that traduce them that truly fear God, and rail on them, and revile them, and give them all manner of opprobrious names, and hold them base and vile? Poor souls! They see not the corruption of their own hearts, and what is within them.

Assuredly, thou that art a malicious wretch, and dost carry thy self spitefully against them that truly fear God, if thou hadst lived in the dayes of Christ, thou wouldst have been ready to have driven the first naile into him. And if thou hadst lived in the dayes of *Queen Mary*, thou wouldst have been as forward as any to have put fire to the Martyrs. And therefore let none of us deceive our selves; let us not think it an easie matter to find out the lurking sins and corruptions of our own hearts. Men of great knowledge and understanding are ignorant of the corruptions of their own hearts, and dost thou think to be easily acquainted with the wickednesse of thine heart? No, no; deceive not thy self; search thine heart diligently, to find out the hidden corruptions of it: it is hard for them that use the greatest care and diligence, to finde out a quarter of that corruption that is in their own hearts: and therefore *David* said, *Psal. 19. 12.* *Who can underst and his faults? cleanse me from secret faults.*

Oh then, take thou pains with thine own heart, be continually sounding and gaging the depth of it, and spying out the secret and hidden corruption of it, and to that end bring thine heart to the rule, even to the Law of God and the Light of his Word, and often call on the Lord, that he would more and more discover to thee the hidden corruptions of thine own heart. In



In the next place ; In that the Apoſtle ſaith, *I had not known luſt, but by the Law, I had not known luſt to be a ſin, except the Law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not luſt;* we are plainly taught,

That Luſt or Concupiſcence is ſin ; I mean not natural luſt or deſire after things that tend to the preſervation of nature, as after meat or drink, or the like; for thoſe were in man before the fall ; Nor yet ſpiritual Luſt after heavenly things, which the Apoſtle calls *The Luſt of the Spirit, Gal. 5. 17.* But by *Luſt*, I underſtand that rebellion of nature, the firſt motions that ariſe from thence, whereby we are ſtirred up to do evil, and do with delight think on any thing contrary to the Will of God, though conſent of our hearts do not follow. Theſe (I ſay) are ſins, and we find them condemned in the Word of God ; and this kind of luſt and concupiſcence is ſin.

Saint John ſaith, 1 Epift. 2. 16. *The luſt of fleſh is not of the Father ; it is evil and ſinful.* And hence it is that Moſes commanded the children of Iſrael to *circumciſe the foreskin of their hearts*, even to pare off the corruption of their hearts, and that indeed the very thought of any thing contrary to the love of God or Man, though conſent of will follow not, is a ſin, it is clear by this reaſon :

Such a thought is directly againſt the Law of God, *Luk. 10. 27. Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength, and with all thy thought, and thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.* It is a fruit of corruption; for we ſhould never have had ſuch a thought if we had continued in the ſtate of innocency. And therefore it muſt needs be held, and that juſtly, to be evil, and to be a ſin, yea, ſuch a thought in them that be truly regenerate, is properly a ſin : and therefore the Apoſtle oppoſeth it to the luſt of the Spirit, *Gal. 5. 17. The fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh, and theſe are contrary one to the other.*

Now then this being a truth, it ſerves firſt to confute the opinion of the Pa-piſts, who hold and teach, that the firſt motions that ariſe in the mind or heart, whereby we are ſtirred up to do evil, if they gain not conſent of will, they are no ſins : which is directly oppoſite to the truth now delivered. Oh but, ſay the Papiſts (among other objections of leſſe weight) they object that, *ſam. 1. 15.* ſay they, We there read, that when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin ; and therefore luſt it ſelf is no ſin, but only brings forth ſin. *Anſw.* It is no good conſequent, Luſt brings forth ſin ; therefore it is no ſin. Indeed it is not that ſin which it brings forth, but yet one ſin may bring forth another, and we may rather thus conclude, Luſt brings forth ſin ; therefore it is ſin : for the proper cauſe and mother of evil muſt needs be evil it ſelf ; and therefore notwithstanding this and other cavils of the Papiſts, it remains a truth, That the firſt motions that ariſe in the mind, whereby we are ſtirred up to evil, though conſent of will follow not, are ſins.

Secondly, this truth plainly ſhews us, that we have great cauſe to be humbled and caſt down in our ſelves : for why ? though it were poſſible ( which indeed cannot be ) but though it were poſſible for us to be free from wicked words and deeds, yet even the evil thoughts that ariſe in our minds, to which we give no conſent at all, but ſnib and check them, yet thoſe very thoughts defile us, and make us guilty of ſin before God : and therefore we have no cauſe to ſwell, and to be proud, and to ſhew forth our pride by ſpeech, countenance, geſture, apparel, or the like, we being guilty not onely of many ſinful words and works, but alſo of many vain and ſinful thoughts and imaginations, the leaſt of which deſerves the curſe of God and everlaſting perdition ; and it is the Lords mercy, that for them we are not utterly confounded.

Again, this being ſo, that the very firſt motions that ariſe in our minds, whereby we are ſtirred up to evil, though conſent of will follow not, are ſinnes : it muſt needs teach us to make conſcience of our very thoughts and deſires ; we may not think, as many fooliſhly do, that our thoughts are free, and that we

*Doctrine 7.*

A thought that is contrary to the Love of God or man is ſin, though conſent of will follow not.

*Reason.*

*Uſe 1.*

Confutation of the opinion of the Papiſts, that the firſt motions to evil in the heart, not gaining conſent of will, are no ſins.

*Uſe 2.*

We have great cauſe to be humbled.

*Uſe 3.*

Conſcience is to be made of evil thoughts and deſires.



ſhall not be accountable to God for them. No, no ; even the evil thoughts of our hearts, to which we never yeeld conſent of will, are ſins, and, without Gods mercy, ſhall plunge us into the pit of everlaſting perdition, and for them we ſtand in need of the precious blood of Jeſus Chriſt. And therefore learn we to make conſcience, not only of what we ſpeak or do, but alſo of what we think or deſire, and labour we to waſh our hearts from wickedneſſe, as the Lord required, *Jer. 4. 14.* Labour we not only to cleanſe our lives from wicked converſation, but to purge our ſoules alſo from evil thoughts and ſinful imaginations ; the Lord ſees the one as well as the other, and will puniſh the one as well as the other ; and therefore learn we to make conſcience of our very thoughts and deſires.

The next thing that comes to be conſidered, is this, the Apoſtle ſaith, *I had not known luſt to be ſin, except the Law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not luſt.* He was deceived touching luſt, and he had not known it to be ſin, but that looking into the Law of God, he there found it expreſſly to be forbidden and condemned, and ſo came to ſee his error, and to be convinced of it. Whereby firſt we ſee, that the Apoſtle freely acknowledgeth that he was deceived, and he is not aſhamed to confeſſe that he was in an error touching luſt, till he came to look into the Law of God, and was thereby convinced of his error. Whence we are taught by his example ; I will but point at it.

*Doctrine 8.*  
Men convinced of error by plain evidence of truth, muſt acknowledge it.

Not to be aſhamed to confeſſe our ſelves to be deceived, and to acknowledge our ſelves to be in an error, being convinced of error by the Word of God, by plain evidence of truth ; it is one ſpecial uſe of the Word of God to diſcover falſhood, and to convince men of error, *2 Tim. 3. 16.* *The Scripture is given by inſpiration of God, and is profitable to teach, to improve ;* that is, to improve errors and falſe opinions, and men being convinced of error, and that which they hold, being diſcovered by the plain evidence of the Word of God to be erroneous and falſe, they are freely to acknowledge it ſo to be, and willingly to ſubſcribe to the truth.

*Uſe.*  
Wilfulneſſe and obſtinacy in error met withal.

And this meets with all ſuch as are wilful in their errors, and obſtinately perſiſt and go on in their erroneous opinions, notwithstanding the plain evidence of the Word of God laid before them to the contrary. It is the caſe of many Browniſts, Papiſts, Anabaptiſts, and others, that are tainted with foul and groſſe errors, though their errors be diſcovered, and though they be convinced by the plain evidence of the Word of God, yet they will not be driven from their errors, nor brought to renounce them, but ſtill they perſiſt, and ſtill they go on in them ; ſurely, ſuch perſons hold a lye in their right hand, the Apoſtle compares them to *Jannes and Jambres who withſtood Moſes, 2 Tim. 3. 8.* *So they reſiſt the truth, and they are men of corrupt minds, and reprobate concerning the faith,* as the Apoſtle there ſpeaks : yea, ſuch perſons reſiſt and withſtand the Spirit of God ; for the Spirit of God ſpeaks to us in the truth of the Word of God. and therefore they withſtanding that truth, *they reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt,* as *Stephen* ſaith of the Jews, *Act. 7. 51.* And without queſtion it is out of pride, and out of an overweening of themſelves, that men are wedded to their own groſſe and erroneous opinions, and will not be driven from them. They think they ſee more then other men do, and more is revealed to them, (and they ſtick not to ſpeak it) then to all the world beſides, when they are dealt withal and convinced by the Word of God, and have nothing to ſay againſt the plain evidence of truth ; yet they think it would be a diſgrace and a diſparagement to them to confeſſe their error. And hence it is that they wilfully perſiſt, and go on in their abſurd and groſſe opinions. Now this we muſt take heed of, this is a fearful height of ſin, and men that are thus conceited, and thus wiſe in their own conceits, and wilfully withſtand the Spirit of God, ſpeaking in the plain evidence of the Word of God, are in a dangerous caſe, *Prov. 26. 12.* *Seeſt thou a man wiſe in his own conceit ? more hope is of a Fool then of him.*

Then



Then learn we not to be aſhamed to confeſſe our ſelves to be deceived, and to be in an error, being convinced of error by the plain evidence of the Word of God; let us in ſuch a caſe give glory to God, and take ſhame to our ſelves; let God be juſtified in his Word and Truth, and let us acknowledge our ſelves to be lyers, being found ſo to be by the evidence of his Word.

Now further, in that the Apoſtle ſaith, *He had not known luſt, except the Law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not luſt*, he had not known luſt to be ſin, but by looking into the Law of God, and there found it expreſſly forbidden and condemned; the point hence is this;

That the Law of God diſcovers ſin, yea, the Law of God diſcovers the ſin of nature, it diſcovers the rebellion of the heart, the very inclination that is in men naturally to evil, and the firſt motions that ariſe from thence, whereby they are ſtirred to evil, though conſent of Will follow not, to be ſins; yea, it is the Law of God only that diſcovers luſt to be ſin, and the firſt motions that ariſe from thence to be ſins, and it is not any other Law, or any other learning in the world that doth that, but onely the Law of God: All the wiſdome of the Heathen, and of all the wiſeſt and moſt learned in the world, was never able to ſee the rebellion of the heart to be ſin, and the firſt motions that ariſe from thence, having not conſent of Will; only the Law and Word of God makes them known ſo to be, and indeed diſcovers them to be ſins; for why?

*Doctrine 9.*  
Only the Law and Word of God diſcovers the rebellion of the heart, and the firſt motions to evil that ariſe thence, to be ſins.

*The Word of God, as it is, Heb. 4. 12. is lively and mighty in operation, and ſharper then any two-edged ſword, and entreth thorow, even to the dividing aſunder of the Soul and the Spirit, and of the joynts and the marrow; and that only is a Diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, that diſcernes the thoughts and the ſinfulneſſe of them. And to this purpoſe the Apoſtle ſaith, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, but through God, to caſt down ſtrong holds, and bringing into captivity every thought, caſting down the imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted againſt the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt: every ſinful and rebellious thought. 2 Pet. 1. 19. The Apoſtle calls the Word of the Prophets, who were the true Interpreters of the Law of God, A light that ſhines in a dark place, becauſe indeed it ſhines in mans heart, as in a dark place, and tryeth out all the ſecrets of his thoughts, and the ſinfulneſſe of them, and makes manifeſt and diſcovers the deep and hidden things that are in the heart. This doth the Law and Word of God, and no other Law or learning in the world is able thus to do. And the reaſon and ground of this truth, is that which is added, Jer. 17. 10.*

Verſe 9. ſaith the Prophet, *The heart is deceitful, and wicked above all things; who can know it?* And then he ſubjoynes, Verſ. 10. *I the Lord ſearch the heart, and try the reins, even to give to every man according to his wayes, and according to the fruit of his works.*

*Reasons*

Now the Lord being *καρδιωγνους*, He being the ſearcher and knower of the heart, *Act. 1. 24.* his Word and his Law muſt needs be like to himſelf, and partake of his nature, vertue, and power; and therefore this we may reſolve on as a certain truth, that the Law of God finds out the rebellion of the heart, and diſcovers that to be ſin, and the firſt motions that ariſe from thence, whereby men are ſtirred up to evil, though conſent of Will follow not, to be ſins, and no other law or learning whatſoever beſides is able ſo to do.

Fiſt, this Truth puts plain difference between the Law of God, and all other lawes and learning in the world. The Law of God only diſcovers the rebellion of the heart to be ſin, and the firſt motions that ariſe from thence, whereby men are ſtirred up to evil, to be ſins, which all the lawes, and all the learning in the world is not able to do.

*Uſe 1.*  
A difference between Gods Law and all other lawes whatſoever;

And hence we may eaſily conceive the Law of God publiſhed in the Book of God, to be the very Word of God, even to be the eternal Word of the



everliving God : for why ? it is not all the learning in the world, that is able to discern the secret thoughts and intents of the heart, and to discover them to be sins, but onely the Law of God published in the Book of God. And therefore, as God alone is the Searcher of the heart, so that Word that declareth to man what be his thoughts, that his very evil thoughts to which he gives no consent of will, are sins, must needs be the Word of the same God, even the eternal Word of the eternal and everliving God. This is a strong argument evincing and demonstrating the Law of God, even the Law of God that is published in the Book of God, to be the very Word of God, against all barking, and blasphemous Atheists in the world.

Use. 2.

Whence it is that the Papists do so magnifie nature.

Again, this being so, that the Law of God discovers the rebellion of the heart to be sin, and the first motions that arise from thence, whereby they are stirred to evil, to be sins, and no other Law nor learning is able so to do ; by this we may see whence it is that the learned Papists do so much exalt flesh and blood, and so magnifie nature, and speak so much of pure naturals. Surely it is from hence, they look on nature onely with the eye of their School-learning, which indeed is a blind guide, and not able to discover to them the filthinesse and corruption of their hearts ; and hence it is that they think they can fulfil the Law of God, and can come to stand just in the sight of God by the works of the Law. Poor souls ! they deceive themselves exceedingly : if they did but look into their own hearts by the light of the Word of God, and by the Law of God, they would be far from thus exalting nature, that would discover to them that the natural stream of their heart is *onely evil, and that continually*, Gen. 6. 5. and that the first motions by which they are stirred up to evil, though consent of will follow not, are sins ; and the consideration of that would pull down their pride and high conceit of their pure naturals.

But to leave them, and to come to ourselves ; Is it so that the Law of God discovers the rebellion of the heart to be sin, and the first motions that arise from thence, whereby they are stirred to evil, to be sins and no other Law or learning in the world is able so to do ?

Use 3.

How by searching, men may finde out the rebellion of their hearts.

If then we would finde out the rebellion of our own hearts, we must search them by the Law of God, the light of that will disclose the darknesse of our minds ; the holinesse of that will reveal the unrighteousnesse and perversnesse of our corrupt natures ; and it is the preaching of the Law of God, and of the Word of God alone, that will search the hearts and lives of men, and discover to them their hidden and secret sins : never was any brought to a sight of his sinnes, and to be humbled for them by any other learning in the world, but onely by the preaching of the Law of God and the Word of God. If our hidden corruption and sins be met withal by the ministry of the Word, we are to acknowledge the finger of God in his own Ordinance ; for no other word or learning in the world is able so to do. It is the manner of some, if their close sins, their bosome sins be met withal by the Word of God, to fret and storm, and to think the Preacher hath been told of their sins, or that he deales with a Familiar. No, no : thou must know it, whosoever thou art, it is the power of the Word of God that finds thee out, and thou art to acknowledge it the Word and Law of God, that is able to dive into thine heart, and to ransack the most secret corners of it, and much more is it able to finde out the sins of thy life, though they be done in a corner. 2 King. 6. 12. We read, that the Prophet *Elisha* told the King of Israel the words that the King of Aram spake in his privy chamber. And so the Word of God is able to disclose the things thou dost in thy bed-chamber, and as the *Apostle* saith, 1 Cor. 14. 25. *To make manifest the secrets of thine heart.*

And therefore, if thy secret sinnes be met withal by the ministry of the Word, acknowledge it to be the very Word of God : for no other learning is able to do that : and submit thy self to the power of it, and learn to be humbled ;  
and



and know this, if thou be not humbled by the Word of God discovering thy sins to thee, thou art more hardned by it, and thou savourest the Word to thy deeper condemnation : for the Word of God is never truly preached in vain ; *It shall accomplish the will of the Lord, and prosper in that for which it is sent.* And if thou be not humbled by it discovering thy sins to thee, thou art more hardned ; and that is a fearful condition, take heed of it.

## V E R S. 8, 9, 10, 11.

*But sin took an occasion by the Commandement, and wrought in me all manner of Concupiscence : for without the Law sin is dead.*

*For I once was alive without the Law : but when the Commandement came, sin revived :*

*But I dyed, and the same Commandement which was ordained unto life, was to be unto me unto death :*

*For sinne took occasion by the Commandement, and deceived me, and thereby slue me.*

**I**N these Verses read, the Apostle goes on further, to cleer the Law from those foul blots that some might haply blemish it withal ; as to be the cause of sin and of death : and he shews, that not the Law, but sin taking occasion by the Law, wrought Concupiscence, revived in him, deceived him and slue him : that is the summe of these four Verses. To come to the handling of them as they lye in order.

In the 8. Verse we have two things offered to our consideration. First, a concession or grant made by the *Apostle*, that sin is an accidental event of the Law ; and this he propounds with a reference to that which went before, implied in the first word (*But.*) *But sin took an occasion by the Law.* As if he had said, The Law indeed is so far from being the cause of sin, as it discovers sin, and makes sin known : but yet this I must needs grant and yield unto, that sin is an accidental event of the Law, sin happens, or sin comes to passe upon occasion of the Law.

Now this Proposition is not thus barely propounded ; but the Apostle, in propounding of it, shews whence it is that sin is an accidental event of the Law, namely, from the pravity and corruption of nature, that corruption took occasion by the commandement to be stirring and to be working. And insisting in his own example, he makes known, how far the corruption of nature was stirring and working on occasion of the Commandement in himself, even to the bringing forth of all manner of concupiscence. Saith he, *Sin took, or, sin taking an occasion by the Commandement, and wrought in me all manner of Concupiscence.*

In which words the Apostle puts down another use of the Law, in respect of such as be unregenerate : That in respect of them, it hath this use as an accidental occasion, it stirs up the corruption of their natures, and upon occasion, of the Commandement forbidding lust, the lust of their hearts becomes more violent, and stirs in them more strongly, and breaks out more violently into all manner of sins ; and then to this Proposition the Apostle subjoynes a reason, which is, from the absence of the Law, or from the ignorance of it, that where either the Law is absent, or not known, there sin lies dead, in the last words, *For without the Law, sin is dead.* And that is further confirmed and amplified in the words following. But to keep within the compasse of this eight Verse, we see the parts of it:

First a Proposition, wherein is particular instance of the *Apostles* own example, in these words, *Sin took, or, sin taking an occasion by the Commandement, and wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.* And then a reason of that in the words following, *For without the Law sin is dead.*

*But sin.* The word *Sin* in this place signifieth the pravity or corruption of



of nature, that in-bred corruption that we brought with us into the world, and carry about us continually: it is the same with that, Chap. 6. 12. *Let not sinne reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Took, or, Taking occasion.* The word here rendred *Occasion*, sometimes signifieth opportunity of doing a thing, it cannot be so taken in this place; but the meaning is this: That though the Law give no occasion of sin, yet mans nature is so corrupt, as it is stirred up by the Law forbidding sin, and thereby it takes occasion to be working, and more fiercely breaks out into all manner of sinnes. (*By the Commandement.*) By that Commandement that forbids Lust, spoken of in the Verse before, by that Commandement truly known, and duly considered. (*Wrought in me*) that is, effected and brought forth in me, I being yet in my natural state and condition, being yet in the flesh, as *Vers. 5. When we were in the flesh.* (*All manner of concupiscence.*) The word (*Concupiscence*) here signifieth actual lust, even actual evil thoughts and desires; and by all manner of concupiscence, the Apostle means all sorts of evil motions, arising from the corruption of nature, contrary to the love of God and the love of Men, and against both the first and second Table of the Commandements; *For without the Law,* that is, Without the knowledge and due consideration of the Law, *Sin is dead,* or was dead, that is, the corruption of nature lay hid, and was not known to be sin, or did not so strongly and so fiercely work; it was as it were dead, in comparison of that strong working it had, after the Law was known and duly considered. That this is the meaning, is cleer by the Context: for the Apostle saith, he knew not lust to be sin, till he came to look into the Law of God, and duly to consider it, and that sin took occasion by the knowledge, and due consideration of the Law, to rage and swell, and to break out into all manner of evils. Thus then conceive we the Apostles meaning in this Verse; as if he had said,

*The Law indeed is not the cause of sinne, but yet the corruption of nature being stirred up by the knowledge and due consideration of that Commandement that forbids lust, though no occasion of sinne was thence given, yet the corruption of nature thereby taking occasion to rage and swell, and to break out, it effected and brought forth in me, being yet in my natural state and condition, all sorts of evill motions, contrary to the love of God, and contrary to the love of Men; for without the knowledge and due consideration of the Law, the corruption of nature was, as it were, dead, it lay hid, and did not so strongly and fiercely work as afterwards, when the Law was known, and duly considered.*

**Doctrine I.**  
Such is the  
pravity and  
perversnesse of  
mans nature,  
as it takes oc-  
casion to break  
out on the  
Commande-  
ment of God.

Here first, in that the Apostle saith, *Sin took occasion by the Commandement:* the corruption of nature on the Commandement took occasion to be stirring and working, to rage, and swell, and to break out more fiercely. We may easily see and conceive the greatnesse and strong working of the corruption of nature; so great is the corruption of nature, and such is the pravity and perversnesse of it, that it takes occasion to break out on the Commandement of God, and the more the holy Will of God is revealed and known, the more doth the corruption of nature rage, and swell, and break out into sin: the wicked nature of man is this; The more he is forbidden to do any thing, the more and the rather he desires and seeks to do it. In this, the corruption of nature is like the Gangrene, the Leprosie, the *Noli me tangere*, and such diseases as are made worse, by such things as should be a meane to cure them, And as a violent strong stream of water, if you roll a great stone into it, or make a damme or bank in the midst of it, the higher it riseth, and the more it roares and swells, and breaks over with greater violence; so it is with the wicked and perverse nature of man, the more it is opposed by the holy Law of God, and the more that it is set against it as a bank to keep it in; the more doth it rage and swell, and the more it breaks out into sinne; and the more a thing is forbidden, the more doth the corrupt mind of man give it self to the doing of it.

We



We may see this cleerly in the example of the Israelites; we find, that when the Lord commanded them, and invited them by many sweet promises to go into the Land of Canaan, then they would not go into it, they dispraise it, they murmur against God, and they like Egypt better, they desire to return thither again, *Numb. 14. 2, 3, 4. The children of Israel murmured against MOSES and AARON, and the whole assembly said unto them, Would God we had dyed in the Land of Egypt, or in this Wildernesse, would God we were dead. Vers. 3. Wherefore now hath the Lord brought us into this Land, to fall upon the sword? our wives and our children shall be a prey: Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? Vers. 4. And they say one to another, Let us make a Captain, and return to Egypt.* And a little after, when the Lord in the same Chapter forbids them to enter into the Land, then they would needs in all haste go thither. The Text saith, *Vers. 40. They rose early in the morning, and gate them up into the top of the Mountain, saying, Loe, we be ready to go up to the place which the Lord hath promised: for we have sinned.*

So again, the Lord commanding them to sacrifice to him on his own Altar onely, their corrupt minds carry them to do otherwise, and to sacrifice to him in every place. When circumcision was commanded of God, all Nations lothed it, but when it was abolished by the death of Christ, then they would needs take it up as a thing needful to salvation: and therefore the Apollle bent himself strongly against it, *Gal. 5. 2, 3. Behold, I PAUL say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testifie again to every man which is circumcised, that he is bound to keep the whole Law.*

To these we might adde many like examples cleering and confirming this truth; That such is the perversenesse of our nature, that it takes occasion to break out on the Commandement, and such is the wicked nature of man, that the more a thing is forbidden, the more his corrupt mind is set on it, and the more he gives himself to the doing of it. And do we not see this in common experience? Are there not many, who the more they are admonished of their evil courses, and the more they are dissuaded from evil, the more their corrupt hearts are set on evil, and the more eagerly they follow it? Is it not sometimes the speech of a blasphemous Swearer, being justly admonished and reprov'd for his swearing, he will therefore swear the more? And is it not thus with some beastly Drunkards, being told of their drunkenesse, and justly reprov'd for it, do they not thereupon give themselves more and more to the practice of that sin? I wish it were not thus with too many: but alas, it is too cleer, it is the case of too many: yea, some there be, that the more their sins are discovered and forbidden by the Word of God, the more desperate they become in a course of evil, and say, Oh, we are the Goates, we are wicked, and we shall be damned; and thereupon they set themselves purposely to do evil, their own corrupt hearts carry them more violently to a course of sinne. The reason of this truth is this:

There is a direct contrariety between the holy Law of God, and the corrupt nature of man: the Law of God bears the stamp of God, it is perfectly just, and holy; and like to God himself: and the corruption of nature beares the stamp of Satan, and his lively Image; and so these two coming together, if the Law of God do not repress and overcome the force and working of corruption, it intends the force of it, and makes it more violent: as the coldnesse of the ayr that is about the fire, intends the heat of the fire, and makes the fire burn more fiercely; so the holy Law of God, coming to the corrupt nature of men, if it do not repress and overcome the force and working of it, without question it intends the force of it, and makes it more violent; and therefore this we may set down as a certain truth, that such is the perversenesse of our nature, that it takes occasion to break out on the Commandement of God, and the wicked nature of man is this, that the more a thing is forbidden, the more his heart (being left to it self) is set on it, and the more he gives himself to the doing of it.

Reason.

Now



*Uſe 1.*  
It is no ſmall  
matter for a  
man to be in  
his natural  
ſtate and con-  
dition.

Now then, this being a truth, it diſcovers firſt, that it is no light and trifling thing, it is no ſmall matter for a man or woman to be in their natural ſtate and condition; many in this reſpect deceive themſelves exceedingly, becauſe haply they are kept by reſtraining grace, from ſome foul and groſſe ſins, as Whoredome, Murder, Stealing, and ſuch like; they bleſſe themſelves, and think themſelves in a marvellous good caſe, and they make nothing of it, that they are yet in their natural ſtate and condition, having no evidence that they are freed from that, and that they are in bondage under the corruption of nature: but alas, they deceive themſelves exceedingly; and ſo long as they are in that ſtate, they are in a miſerable condition: for why? through the perversneſſe of their nature, they are ready to turn that to an occaſion of ſin, which ſhould be a means to do them moſt good; they are ready to turn the Law of God, and the holy Word of God, which is the chief means to cure ſin in them, to an occaſion to make them ſin the more, and to go on with greater violence and eagerneſſe in a courſe of ſin; and that is a miſerable ſtate: what hope can there be of any good in ſuch a caſe as that?

We hold that Horſe to be a very Jade, that the more he is ſpurred, the more he goes backward: and we hold that to be a ſtubborn and deſperate child, that becauſe his Father wills him to do a thing, therefore he ſets himſelf againſt it; and the more earneſt his Father is to have him do it, the more backward he ſhews himſelf to the doing of it. Now this is the caſe of every one of us by nature; ſo wicked and ſo perverſe is our nature, that the more the Lord requires good duties at our hands, the more untoward we are to the doing of them; and the more any evil is forbidden, the more eagerly we deſire it, and ſeek to do it, if we be left to our ſelves; and therefore think it not a matter of nothing to be in thy natural ſtate and condition, ſo long as thou art in that ſtate, thou art in a miſerable ſtate: and therefore finding thy ſelf in that ſtate and condition, haſten out of it, and never reſt, till thou be renewed by grace, and that thou art wrought on by the Spirit of grace and ſanctification.

*Uſe 2.*

We muſt come  
prepared to  
the hearing of  
the Word of  
God.

Again, is it ſo, that the perversneſſe of nature is ſuch, that it takes occaſion to break out on the Commandement of God, and the more any evil is forbidden, the more the corrupt heart of man is ſet on it, and the more he gives himſelf to the doing of it? We muſt then learn to come to the hearing of the Word of God prepared; for why? we are in danger, through the perversneſſe of our own nature, to turn that into our bane and poyſon, that ſhould be a means to do us moſt good, even to take occaſion from the holy Word of God diſcovering our ſins, and condemning them, to become more eager and violent in a courſe of ſin, and to be hardened in our evil waies, as many are by the Miniſtery and Preaching of the Word of God: and therefore we are carefully to prepare our ſelves, when we come to hear the Word of God, we are to labour to diſburden our hearts of ſinful luſts, and of that perversneſſe that is in them by nature, and to humble our ſoules before the Lord, intreating him to ſanctifie our hearts by his grace, and to come in fear and trembling, that ſo the Word may be to us a Word of life and comfort, and a Word of ſalvation.

*Obſer.*

In the next place obſerve we, that the Apoſtle ſaith, *Sin took occaſion by the Commandement.* The Commandement of God gave no occaſion, but the corruption of nature thereby took occaſion to be ſtirring, and working, and to bring forth all manner of evil. We ſee then, the Apoſtle clears the Commandement of God, and frees that from blame, he juſtifies that, and layes no fault on that at all; but he layes the fault and blame where it ought to lye, namely, on the corruption of nature, that the corruption of nature took occaſion where none was given, even by the holy Commandement, to bring forth all manner of concupiſcence.

*Doctrin 2.*

Whence note we, how we may clear the holy Word of God preached, from all fault and blame, when it becomes to ſome men a ſavour of death, and they are thereby hardened and made worſe. By this we learn how to juſtifie the holy



holy Word of God preached, in that reſpect, and to lay the fault and blame where it ought to be, namely, on the corruption of their own hearts: the holy Word of God preached, gives men no occaſion to be hardened, and made worſe in a courſe of ſin, but their own wicked and corrupt hearts thereby take occaſion to be hardened and to become worſe, and from the ſtrength of their own corruption they pervert the holy Word of God to their own deſtruction; and thus it was ſaid by the Prophet ISAIAH, *Iſai. 6. 9, 10. Go and ſay unto this people, Ye ſhall hear indeed, but ye ſhall not underſtand; ye ſhall plainly ſee, and not perceive: make their hearts fat, make their ears heavy, and ſhut their eyes, leſt they ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand with their hearts, and convert, and be heal them.*

The holy Word of God juſtified, though ſome be hardened by the preaching of it,

The holy Prophet is ſaid to make their heart fat, and to harden them becauſe they were hardened by occaſion of his preaching. His preaching gave them no occaſion: but they thereby took occaſion to be hardened and made worſe. So is that place to be underſtood; and ſo we learn how to juſtify the holy Word of God preached, and to free it from blame, though ſome be thereby hardened, and favour it to death and to their own deſtruction: the fault is not in the Word of God, but in their own corruption; yea, by this we learn to juſtify God, and to clear Him in reſpect of His dealing with men, when He is ſaid to harden their hearts, and to ſtirre them up to evil. The Lord hardens the heart, and ſtirres up to evil, not by inſtilling or infuſing any the leaſt evil into the hearts of men, but by ſetting before them ſuch things, as they through their own corruption abuſe, and turn to occaſions of evil to themſelves; as his precepts, his threatenings, his counſels, his bleſſings. *Pſalm 105. 25.* it is ſaid, The Lord turned the heart of the Egyptians to hate his People. The meaning is, they hated Gods people becauſe the Lord bleſſed them; they took occaſion by thoſe benefits the Lord beſtowed on his People, to hate them. And ſo the Lord turned their hearts to hate his people, not by putting evil into them, but by ſetting his benefits beſtowed upon his People, before them, by which through their own corruption, they took occaſion to hate Gods people. And thus we may juſtify the Lords dealing with man, and clear him from blame, when he is ſaid to harden their hearts, and to ſtirre them up to evil.

How God hardens the heart and ſtirres up to evil.

Further obſerve we, that the Apoſtle here ſaith, that *Sin taking occaſion by the Commandment, wrought in them all manner of Concupiſcence*, it effected, and it brought forth in him all ſorts of evil motions. Where we ſee, the Apoſtle gives to the corruption of nature, an effecting or working power, a power to effect, and to bring forth evil motions. Hence then we may eaſily gather thus much;

Obſerv.

That the corruption of nature is a thing that hath a real being. it is not, as ſome have thought, a mere abſence or privation, or a mere want of that holineſſe and righteouſneſſe that ought to be in us: but it is a poſitive thing, it is a thing that hath a real being, it is both a guiltineſſe of the ſin of our firſt Parents; for in Adam all ſinned, Rom. 5. 12. and it is an inclination, and a proneneſſe of all the faculties of the ſoul to that which is evil, and againſt the Law of God; and ſo it is a thing that hath a real being; and it is the proper cauſe producing and bringing forth all evil motions, and all wicked and ſinful actions, it is the mother ſin, in brings forth all other ſins whatſoever. And to this purpoſe the Apoſtle James ſpeaks plainly, Chap. 1. 14, 15. ſaith he, *Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own concupiſcence, and is enticed. And when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſinne; and ſinne, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth death.* Where we ſee, he gives a power to concupiſcence, that is, to the corruption of nature, to entice, to draw to ſin, and to conceive, and bring forth ſin, even all manner of actual ſins.

Doctrine 3.  
Natural corruption hath a real being.

And hence is the corruption of nature called, *The body of ſin*, Rom. 6. 6. and *the old man*, in that place and in many other places: and it is called, *the fleſh*. All which denominations do ſignifie and imply thus much, that it is a Poſitive thing, and hath a real being; yea, the Apoſtle aſcribes to the corruption of nature, a luſting,



lusting, *Rom. 6. 12.* Let not sin reign therefore in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof: and *Gal. 5. 17.* The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh; and these are contrary one to the other. And therefore doubtlesse it hath a real being, and it hath an effecting and working power, and as a mother, it brings forth all manner of actual sin.

*Use 1.*  
Pelagians ancient and of later times confuted.

This being a truth, it first meets with the error of the *Pelagians*: this being true, it cannot be true, that the *Pelagians* of ancient and of later times held, that all sins that are committed, they come not from the corruption of nature, but they are done only by imitation. So *Pelagius* and his followers held and taught. That cannot stand with this truth, that the corruption of nature hath a real being, and as a mother, gives being to other sins, and as a mother, brings forth all manner of actual sins.

*Use 2.*  
Children do evil, not onely by imitation, but the evil they do, comes from a root of corruption in themselves.

Again, is it so, that the corruption of nature hath a real being, and hath an effectual and working power, and as a mother, brings forth all manner of actual sins? Surely then children do not evil only, because they see others to do evil, children do not practise evil only by imitation; which was likewise the error of the *Pelagians*: but the evil that children do, it comes from a root within them, the corruption of nature hath a real residence and being in them, and that corruption hath a working power, and that gives being to all the evils they commit; and that children do evil from the corruption that hath a real residence and being in themselves, may plainly appear by this.

Many times some particular evil quality is found in a child in his infancy, the child is peevish, froward, and such like; it hath some particular evil quality in it, in the very infancy, before it can learn any thing that is ill by imitation: and therefore certainly the corruption of nature is a thing that hath a real residence and being in children, and hath a working power in them, and gives being to all the evil they commit. And this Parents are to take notice of; Parents are not onely to consider that their children are subject to learn ill, and to take it from examples, and so to take heed they give them no ill example, wherein many are faulty; but they must think on this, that there is a root of bitterness really abiding in their children, and that, that hath an effecting and working power, and gives being to all the evils that they commit, and so labour by all good means to root it out of their children. *Prov. 22. 15.* saith *Solomon*, Foolishnesse is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it away from him: there is a bundle of folly in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it away.

Let then all Parents take notice of that folly, and that vanity and wickednesse that is really abiding in their children, and labour by instruction, by correction, and by all other means to drive it out. If thou fail in this duty, thou that art a Father or Mother, thou shalt one day find to thy wo and sorrow, that there is a bitter root really abiding in the heart of thy child, it will one day shew forth the working power of it, and break out into stubbornnesse, disobedience, and many foul disorders; yea, haply such, as will bring thy child to an untimely end: and then thou wilt wish that thou hadst taken notice of it, and in time laboured to root it out: but then it will be too late; yea, then thou shalt find a burr in thine own soul, and a wound in thine own conscience: for without repentance, the blood of that child shall be required at thy hands: therefore let all Parents think on this duty.

One thing note we further in the Apostles Proposition. He saith, that *sinne taking occasion by the Commandement, wrought in him all manner of concupiscence.* That is to be observed of us, even in *Paul* himself, being yet in his natural state and condition, the corruption of nature effected and brought forth all sorts of evil motions, contrary to the love of God, and contrary to the love of men; and yet *Paul* was a man excellently will gifted and qualified, even before his Conversion, he saith of himself, *Gal. 1. 14.* that he profited in the Jewish Religion above many of his companions, and of his own Nation, and was much more zealous of



of the tradition of his fathers : And Philip. 3. 6. Touching the righteousness which is in the Law, saith he, I was unrebukable. And yet even in him thus qualified, did the corruption of nature, on occasion of the Commandement, effect and bring forth all sorts of evil motions and lusts. Hence then we are given to understand,

That there is in all and every man and woman the same seeds of sin, and the same perversnesse of nature, though they be never so well descended, even of the best Parents in the world, never so well qualified ; men that have the greatest gifts of nature, or the greatest endowments of learning, or the like, they have in them by nature the same seeds of sin that other men have, yea, in the best man in the world, there are by nature the seeds of all manner of sins, as Christ saith, Joh. 3. 6. *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh* : it is nothing but a lump of corruption. Hence it is that men that are yet in their natural state, are said to be *darknesse*, Ephes. 5. 8. and to be *in the flesh*, Vers. 5. of this Chapter, and to be *dead*, Ephes. 2. 1. *in trespasses and sins*. All these Phrases do shew, that men that are yet in their natural state and condition, are overwhelmed in sin, and are nothing but a lump of corruption. And so, whatsoever they be, be they never so well descended, or never so well qualified, they have in them by nature the same seeds of sin that others have. The reason and ground of this truth is this :

All men do equally from *Adam* partake of the nature of man, and are all alike the children of wrath ; and therefore there is in all and every one by nature, the same seeds of sin, and the same perversnesse of nature ; indeed the corruption of nature doth not break out in all natural men alike, because it is limited and kept in by the hand of God, and by restraining grace ; and men are kept from breaking out into some notorious foul sins, by good education, by wholesome Lawes of men, by their own natural temper, and constitution of body, and the like.

But yet this remains a truth, that be men never so well descended ; or never so well qualified, they have in them by nature the same seeds of sin that others have : and therefore let no man or woman think highly of themselves, and lift up themselves in a conceit of goodnesse and excellency of their own natures.

It is the manner of some to magnifie their own good natures, and to think they have excellent natures, they are not given to such and such sins, they thank God they are not so ill as others are. But let such persons know, they deceive themselves ; it is not the goodnesse of their nature, but the hand of God, and his restraining grace that keeps them from those sins that others fall into ; nature in them is as corrupt in the root, as in the worst men in the world. And whence is it, that thou art not so bad as *Cain*, as *Pharaoh*, as the *Sodomites*, as *Judas*, or the vilest monster in all outrage of sin, thou being yet in thy natural state and condition ? Surely, from the hand and power of God, and from his restraining grace. And therefore cease thou from magnifying thine own good nature, and blesse God for so restraining thy nature, and desire of the Lord, that as he hath given thee a better tempered nature then others, and thou art not naturally given to such foul sins as others are, so he would be pleased to go on with his mercy, and give unto thee his special renewing grace, even the sanctifying grace of his Spirit, without which thou shalt never see the face of God to thy comfort.

The best natured man or woman in the world, if they have no more in them but the goodnesse of nature, they shall go to hell. And therefore never rest, till thou find thine heart renewed by grace, and that the Spirit of God hath framed thee in some measure to the Image of Jesus Christ ; and that will give thee comfort, and that will give thee assurance of Gods special love towards thee in Jesus Christ.

One thing mark we further in the Apostles Proposition ; he saith, *The corruption of nature taking occasion by the Commandement, brought forth in him* (he being

#### Doctrine 4.

The same seeds of sin are in every man and woman by nature.

#### Reason.

#### Use.

Men are not to pride themselves in a conceit of goodnesse and excellency of their nature.



being yet in his natural state) *all manner of concupiscence*, even all sorts of evil motions and lusts, all ill motions contrary to the love of God, and contrary to the love of Men; Hence then it is clear,

*Doctrine 5.*  
Natural corruption hath a strong working in unregenerate persons.

That the corruption of nature hath a marvellous strong working in unregenerate persons, it carries a strong hand over them and in them, it carries them directly against the Commandement of God, yea, on occasion of the Commandement, it stirres up in them all manner of evil motions and lusts: no thought so wicked, and no lust so vile, but the corruption of nature brings it forth in unregenerate persons, on occasion of the Commandement of God: the Commandement of God which forbids sin, and is the rule of good life, and so should work good in men, it works no good at all in unregenerate persons being left to themselves, nay it is so far from working good in themselves, as on occasion of that, their corruption stirres, and works, and brings forth in them all manner of evil.

*Use.*  
Freedom of will in spiritual good things in unregenerate persons, overthrown.

Where then is any place for freedom of will in unregenerate persons, as the Papists hold and teach. That men being yet in their natural state and condition, have freedom of will in things that are spiritual, and truly good, and commanded of God in his Word, and that mere natural and unregenerate persons may will that which is truly good? That cannot stand with this truth that the corruption of nature hath such a strong working in unregenerate persons, as, on occasion of the Commandement of God, it stirres up in them all sorts of evil motions and lusts. Is it possible, that unregenerate persons should have it in their free choice to will spiritual good things, and to be able freely to will and choose that which is truly good and holy? and yet the frame of their hearts is not onely altogether evil of it self even from the cradle, *Gen. 8. 21.* The disposition of their understanding, their will and their affections, with all that their hearts devise, frame or imagine, is not onely wholly evil; but more then that, so strong is the corruption of their nature, as, on occasion of the Commandement of God, it breaks out, and stirres up in them all manner of evil motions and lusts, and they are made worse by that which should be a means to do them good.

Is it possible there should be a liberty and freedom of will in such a miserable bondage? No, no; it is a thing altogether impossible, and it is a mere fancy, and an idle conceit, to think that unregenerate persons have freedom of will in things spiritual and heavenly, and can freely will that which is truly good: we are to renounce it as a grosse Popish error.

*Doctrine 6.*  
Where the Law and Word of God is wanting, or not soundly known, there natural corruption hath not that violent working in unregenerate persons, as where the Law and Word of God is known, and thorowly considered.

Come we now to the last words of this Verse, *For without the Law, sinne is dead.* In these words, as before we shewed, the Apostle addes a reason to his foregoing Proposition. The meaning of them I have also given, as that they are thus to be conceived; *That without the true knowledge and due consideration of the Law of God, the corruption of nature lyes as it were dead, it lyes hid, and hath not that strong and violent working, as it hath when the Law of God is known.* From these words thus understood, two things are offered. I will speak of them in order.

First this; hence we are given to understand, That where the Law of God is either wanting, or men having the Law and Word of God, do not soundly know it, and duly consider it, there the corruption of nature hath not that raging and violent working, and it breaks not out with that violence in unregenerate persons, as it doth where the Law and Word of God is well known, and thoroughly considered of them that be unregenerate, being then left to themselves. Indeed we may not think, that the corruption of nature hath not a strong and a powerful working in unregenerate persons, where the Law and Word of God is either wanting, or is not well known, and duly considered of them. No, no; doubtlesse it hath a strong and powerful working in unregenerate persons, either wanting the Law and Word of God, or having it, and yet being ignorant of it, or not duly considering it, the corruption of nature even then brings forth



in them most vile and most abominable fruits. The Apostle shews it at large, *Rom. 1.* in many Verses, as, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30.

But this is the thing that I deliver grounded on this Text : That where the Law and Word of God is either wanting, or men having it, do not know it, or do not at all consider it, or but slenderly ; there, though the corruption of nature do strongly prevail, yet it hath not that fierce, and that raging and violent working in unregenerate persons, as it hath where the Law and Word of God is soundly known, and thorowly considered of them that be unregenerate, they being then left to themselves : and for this, we have further evidence and testimony of Scripture, and this may be further confirmed by some examples out of the Book of God.

To this purpose read *Jer. 36.* We there find, that though *Jehoiakim* the King was a wicked man, and his corrupt heart set him on to work much evil in the sight of the Lord, yet then did his corruption rage and swell, and then did it break out fiercely and violently, when *Jehudi* had read before him the Roll that was written from the mouth of *Jeremiah*, then the Text saith, *Vers. 23.* that in his rage he cut the Roll, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, and burnt it. Yea then his rage was so great, he was so violently carried to mischief, and set on it, as he sent to take *BARUCH* and *JEREMIAH*, to clap them up in prison, *Vers. 26.* *Jer. 36. 23.*

And thus we read of the people, *Jer. 44.* Though they were foul and grosse Idolaters before, yet then were they raging mad on that sin, and carried after it with violence, when they heard and knew the Word of the Lord to the contrary, from the mouth of the Prophet; then they said, *Vers. 16, 17.* *The word that thou hast spoken unto us in the Name of the Lord, we will not hear it of thee. But we will do whatsoever thing goeth out of our own mouth, as to burn incense to the Queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done.*

And thus we read of the people of *Ephesus*, *Act. 19.* their corruption strongly prevailed over them, to the worship of their goddess *Diana*; yet it had not that force, that raging, and that violent working in them, till they knew the Word and Will of God to the contrary, by the preaching of *Paul*; then their corruption had a marvellous violent working in them. The Text saith, *Vers. 28.* *that then they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is DIANA of the Ephesians.* And so, *Vers. 34.* *There arose amongst them a shout almost for the space of two houres, of all men, crying, Great is DIANA of the Ephesians.* *Act. 19. 28.*

By these examples not to adde more, we see, that howsoever the corruption of nature have a strong working in such as either want the Law and Word of God, or having it, are ignorant of it, or do not duly consider it, yet it hath not that fierce, that raging and violent working, as it hath in them that know the Law and Word of God, and throughly consider it; they being then left to themselves, in them the corruption of nature rageth extreemly, and it breaks out most violently : and the reason is plain ;

Such as either want the Law and Word of God, or are ignorant of it, the corruption of nature hath nothing to hinder the working of it, it goes on smoothly and sheer away, and with an even course, without any interruption or disturbance at all : but in them that know the Law and Word of God, and duly consider it, there is that knowledg, and that consideration to stop and to hinder the course of their corruption ; and therefore in them, being left to themselves, the corruption of nature hath a most fierce and a most violent working.

Now this being a truth, it may serve to arm and strengthen us against amazement, and wonder, when we see men that know the Law, and know the Word of God notwithstanding to break out into fearful outrage in sin. We are not to marvel at mens outrage in sin in these dayes wherein they have the cleer sight of the Word shining forth to them, and they have also knowledg of it : for why ? The Devil now rageth more then in former times, because his time is short ; and in men that know the Law and Word of God, being left to them-

*Reason.*

*Use.*

Strength against amazement in those men that knowing the Law and Word of God, break out into fearful outrage of sin.



selves, the corruption of their nature rageth extremely, and breaketh out most violently; yea, in them the corruption of nature hath a more fierce and a more violent working, then in them that either want the Word of God, or are ignorant of it. And therefore we are not to marvel at it, that many that live in the clear light of the Word of God, and where it is truly and faithfully preached, and have knowledge of the Word forbidding sin, are notwithstanding most outrageous in sin, and carried on most violently in a course of sin; we are not to wonder at this. Yet in the mean time, such persons as are so carried on in sin, are in a fearful case, and it is the case of too many.

Are there not many that know the Word of God forbidding sin, yea, that know the Word of God forbidding their particular sins, and have often heard it urged against their particular sins of Pride, of Covetousnesse, of Drunkennesse, of Sabbath-breaking, and such like; and yet the corruption of their hearts carries them on even with violence and eagernes, to the practice of these sinnes? Surely, such persons are in a miserable condition. They that either want the Word of God, or are ignorant of it, though they be in a miserable taking; yet thou that knowest the Word of God forbidding sin, yea, forbidding that particular sin, which thy corruption carries thee even with violence to practise, thy case is far worse; for that is to sin against knowledg, and presumptuously, yea, that is a fearful step to that unpardonable sin, the sin against the Holy Ghost, yea, that seals up to thee a fearful conclusion; if thou speedily amend not, it is more then probable, that thou art in the state of reprobation, thou art a child of disobedience and wilful rebellion; and therefore thou art not only a child of wrath, as all others are by nature, but it is more then probable, that thou shalt never be received to mercy, and that thou art a child of perdition.

Oh let all such as are carried on violently in a course of sinne, though they know the Word of God to the contrary, think on this; and if hell have not taken hold and possession of them, let them bethink themselves of speedy reformation.

Now the second thing offered unto us, in that the Apostle saith, *Without the Law, sin is dead*; without the true knowledge of the Law, the corruption of nature lies hid, and as it were dead, is this:

*Doctrine 7.*  
They that either know not the Law and Word of God, or consider it not, have no true touch of conscience, in regard of inward corruption.

That ignorant persons, such as either know not the Law and Word of God, or at least consider it not as they ought, they have no true touch of conscience in respect of inward corruption, the corruption of nature lyes as it were dead in them, not only in respect of the working power of it; it hath not in them that accusing power, that it hath in those that are acquainted with the Law and Word of God, the ugliness and grievousnesse of the corruption of nature, doth not presse and lye heavy on the soules of such as are ignorant of the Law and Word of God, they are not touched with the danger of it, they see not themselves, in regard of the corruption of nature, under the curse of God, and liable to everlasting perdition. And why? Surely, because they know not Lust to be sin, they see not the corruption of nature to be sin, and to be a thing forbidden and condemned in the Law of God; no, though they be men of great knowledge and understanding in other things, yet they are as blind as Beetles in respect of the corruption of nature, they see not their ignorance of God, and of his Word, their hardnesse of heart, their distrust of Gods providence, their self-love, their seeking themselves, their own ease, pleasure, profit, and many actual lusts of their hearts, to be sins, much lesse do they see the root of those lusts, the corruption of their nature, to be sin; and therefore they cannot be touched with the weight of it, and with the danger of it, and find themselves under the curse of God in regard of it.

*Use.*  
It is needful that the Law of God should be taught, & that men should learn it.

This serves further to discover to us the necessary use of teaching and learning the Law of God, that it is needful the Law of God should be taught, and that men should learn it, and come to the knowledge of it. Men that are ignorant of the Law of God, or at least consider it not as they ought, they have no true touch



touch of conſcience in reſpect of inward corruption, the corruption of nature lyes, as it were, dead in them, even in reſpect of the accusing power of it, and they go on in a deadneſſe and dulneſſe of heart, and have no ſenſe or feeling of their inward luſts, that are ſtrong and powerful in them: they are not humbled, they ſorrow not, they grieve not, they hang not down their heads, in regard of inward corruption: and why? Becauſe it is not in them? No, no: but becauſe they feel it not, they have no touch of conſcience in reſpect of it, being ignorant of the Law of God, that ſhould bring them to a true touch of conſcience, for the very corruption of their hearts, and make them ſee themſelves, in regard that they are under the wrath of God, and lyable to everlaſting perdition; and therefore it is needful that the Law of God ſhould be taught, and that men ſhould learn it, and come to the knowledge of it; and to this purpoſe conſider but this, without knowledge of the Law of God, men can never come to a ſight of the corruption of their own hearts, and without a true ſight of it, they can never come to be truly humbled for it, and without true humiliation for it; in ſome meaſure, they cannot come to be raiſed up with true comfort. And therefore, as we tender our own good and comfort, we are to learn the Law of God, that thereby we may come to the knowledge of the corruption of our own hearts, and may be truly humbled for it, and ſo find true comfort in Jeſus Chriſt.

## V E R S. 9.

*For I once was alive without the Law: but when the Commandement came, ſin revived:*



He Apoſtle having ſaid, *Without the Law, ſin is dead*; without the Law, ſin lay as it were, dead, both in regard of the working, and alſo of the accusing power of it; In this Verſe he confirms it by his own example, he gives inſtance in himſelf, and ſhews, that even in himſelf ſin lay, as it were dead, without the Law. That is the general drift and purpoſe of the Apoſtle in this Verſe; and thus much is intended by him, and eaſily gathered from his words, though it be not in theſe very termes propounded in this Verſe.

We have laid before us two contrary ſtates and conditions both of the Apoſtle himſelf, and of ſin in regard of the Law. As firſt, that without the Law the Apoſtle was once alive, and ſin was then dead. In the firſt words, *For I once was alive without the Law, and ſin was then dead*: that is not expreſſed, but implied. And then ſecondly, that on the coming of the Commandement, ſin which before was dead, revived, and then he dyed. *But when the Commandement came, ſin revived, but I dyed.*

*For I once*, that is, I my ſelf, heretofore being a Pharife, being in my natural ſtate, and before my converſion, *was alive*, that is, ſeemed to my ſelf to be alive, in mine own conceit and opinion I was alive. Now the life the Apoſtle here intends, is ſpiritual life, and that is put for a good and an happy ſpiritual ſtate and condition; for ſo the word (*Life*) is ſometimes uſed in Scripture, for an happy ſtate and condition, as *Pſal. 34. 122 What man is he that deſireth life?* That is, Who is it that would live well and happily, in an happy ſtate and condition? And ſo the Apoſtles meaning, in ſaying, *I was alive*, is this; I was in mine own conceit and opinion in a marvellous good caſe, I thought my ſelf, in regard of my ſpiritual ſtate and condition, exceeding well, and far from any danger of death and damnation: I obſerved the Law outwardly, and touching the outward obſervation of it, *I was unrebukeable*, Phil. 3. 6. and I was ſecure, my conſcience did not trouble me, nor make me afraid of Gods juſtice and vengeance. So much is implied in that phraſe (*I was alive.*) *Without the Law*, that we expounded before, and ſhewed



ſhewed this to be the meaning, Without the ſound knowledge and due conſideration of the Law of God.

*But when the Commandement came.*] By *Commandement*, we are to underſtand that Commandement before ſpoken of, that forbids luſt and condemnes it. And the *Apoſtle* ſaith, that *the Commandement came*; not becauſe he had it not before, but becauſe he did not rightly underſtand it, and duly conſider it; for this phraſe is oppoſed to the former, *without the Law*: and ſo the Commandement came to the Apoſtle, when he rightly underſtood it, and did duly conſider it (*ſin revived.*) The word *Sin* is here to be taken as before, for the corruption of nature, for inward luſt and concupiſcence, and that is ſaid to revive, when it ſhews forth the power of it, both in ſtirring and working, and in accuſing; without ſound knowledg and due conſideration of the Law of God, it lay, as it were, dead, but on the ſound knowledge and due conſideration of the Law, it began to ſhew forth the life of it, even ſtrongly to ſtirre, and to work, and to accuſe.

*And I dyed.*] This is oppoſed to that he ſaid before (*was alive.*) The meaning is this:

*I found my ſelf in regard of my ſpiritual ſtate and condition, as a dead man, I ſaw my ſelf guilty of ſin, and ſo under the curſe and wrath of God, and liable to eternal death and damnation; my conſcience accuſed me, and made me afraid of Gods wrath and vengeance.* That is the meaning of that phraſe (*I dyed.*) Thus then conceive we the meaning of the Apoſtle in the words of this Verſe, as if he had ſaid,

*But I my ſelf heretofore, when I was a Pharifee, and did not ſoundly underſtand the Law of God, nor duly conſider it, but contented my ſelf with an outward obſervation of it, thought my ſelf, in regard of my ſpiritual ſtate and condition, exceeding well, and in a marvellous good caſe, I was ſecure, my conſcience never troubled me, and I thought my ſelf far from any danger of death and damnation: but when I came to a right underſtanding, and due conſideration of the Commandement of God, that forbids Luſt, and condemnes it, then the corruption of my nature, the luſt of mine heart, ſhewed forth the life of it, then it began ſtrongly to work, and to ſtirre and to accuſe me, then I found my ſelf, in regard of my ſpiritual ſtate and condition, in a miſerable caſe, then my conſcience accuſed me, and terrified me, and I ſaw my ſelf guilty of ſin, and ſo under the curſe of the Law and wrath of God, and liable to eternal death and damnation.*

Here firſt obſerve we, that the *Apoſtle* ſaith, that when he was a Pharifee, and had no ſound knowledge of the Law of God, nor due conſideration of it, but reſted onely in the outward obſervation of the Law, then he thought himſelf alive, he then thought himſelf, in regard of his ſpiritual ſtate and condition, exceeding well, and in a marvellous good caſe. Now that which was the conceit and thought of the Apoſtle, is the very conceit and thought of all natural men being ignorant of the Law of God. or not duly conſidering it: and the point hence is this,

**Doctrine 1.**

It is the nature of ignorant perſons, to pleaſe themſelves in an outward conformity to Gods Law.

That ſuch as are ignorant of the Law and Word of God, or do not duly conſider it, they pleaſe themſelves exceedingly in an outward conformity to the Law of God; and if they carry themſelves orderly, and yeeld an outward conformity to the Law, and perform outward good things, they are highly conceited of themſelves, and they think they are in a marvellous good caſe, in reſpect of their ſpiritual ſtate and condition; it is the nature of ignorant perſons to bleſſe themſelves, in reſpect of their outward good carriage and civil behaviour, and to think themſelves, in reſpect of that, alive to God-ward, and without all queſtion in Gods favour, and far from any danger of death and damnation. This is the conceit of all ignorant perſons, even of all ſuch as are not well acquainted with the Law and Word of God, or do not duly conſider it. We ſee it here in the example of the Apoſtle; and to this purpoſe we have other examples in the Word of God, as that of the Pharifee, *Luke. 18. 11, 12.* we there read, that the Pharifee gives thanks to God, that he was not thus and thus, *That he was*  
not



not an Extortioner, Unjuſt, an Adulterer, or as this Publicane : but he did this, and he did that, He faſted, and he gave almes, and ſuch like. As if he had ſaid in plain terms, I thank God, I carry my ſelf orderly and well, and I do good duties ; and therefore I doubt not but that I am in a good caſe, and I am in the favour of God, and I am far from danger of death and damnation.

And thus we read, *Matth. 19.* that a vaunting young man coming to Chriſt, *Matth. 19. 17,* and demanding, *What he ſhould do to be ſaved?* and Chriſt ſaying to him, *If 18. thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandements.* And on his further demand, telling him which, he further ſaid to Chriſt, *Verſ. 20. I have obſerved all theſe things from my youth; what lack I yet?* He being unacquainted with the true ſenſe and meaning of the Law, and reſting on an outward obſervance of ſome Commandements, he was highly conceited of himſelf, he thought himſelf in a marvellous good caſe; and unleſſe Chriſt could tell him what he ſhould do more, he had done as much as would certainly bring him to heaven.

And this is the conceit of all ſuch as are unacquainted with the Law and Word of God, or do not duly conſider it; they think, if they live civilly and yeeld only an outward conformity to the Law of God, and Will of God, revealed in his Word, they are in a marvellous good caſe, and they cannot be perſwaded, that they are in a bad caſe, and in any danger of death and damnation: and if you tell them that they are in danger of it, they will be ready to answer you, as the people did the Prophet, *Jer. 2. 35. They are guiltleſſe, and they feare no ſuch danger.* And to ſay with the Church of *Laodicea, Rev. 3. 17.* that *they are rich; and they are marvellous Well, and in good caſe.* And why? Surely, the reaſon of it is this:

Men are ready to ſoothe up themſelves; and to think well of themſelves, that is natural in every one; and men being ignorant of the Law of God, men being unacquainted with the perfection of the Law, as that the Law of God requires exact and perfect holineſſe and righteouſneſſe as well inward as outward, and imagining that the Law requires no more but an outward obſervance and performance of good duties, being not able to ſee the depth and length of the Law of God; hereupon it comes, that men yeelding an outward conformity to the Law, and carrying themſelves orderly in the world, they bleſſe themſelves, and think they are well and in very good caſe; and when they are in the worſt caſe of all, they think themſelves in the beſt.

This being a truth, in the firſt place it diſcovers whence it is that the Papists do ſo pleaſe themſelves in their outward performances, and their outward obſervances: they bleſſe themſelves, if they ſay over ſo many Creeds, and ſo many *Pater noſters*, and do ſuch and ſuch good works, yea, they think that the very doing of ſuch and ſuch works, merits at the hands of God, and that no leſſe, then the reward of eternal life. Poor ſoules! they deceive themſelves in their own conceit; and here is the cauſe of their miſ-conceit; they are ignorant of the Law of God, or at leaſt conſider it not as they ought, they either know not, or they conſider not the ſtrict juſtice of the Law of God, that it requires exact and perfect holineſſe, as well of heart as of life, and a perfection of love both to God and Men: this they are either ignorant of, or they conſider it not.

To come to our ſelves; Is it ſo, that ſuch as are ignorant of the Law and Word of God, or do not duly conſider it, they pleaſe themſelves exceedingly, in an outward conformity to the Law; and if they carry themſelves orderly & civilly, they think they are in a marvellous good caſe, in regard of their ſpiritual ſtate & condition? By this then we may eaſily ſee, whence it is that men are ſecure, and pleaſe themſelves in their civil carriage, and their outward conformity to the Law of God, and think, that in regard of that, they are in a marvellous good caſe, yea, that they are in the favour of God, and free from danger of death & damnation.

Surely, hence it is, they are ignorant of the Law and Word of God, or at leaſt, they conſider it not as they ought, they carry themſelves civilly in the world, and they do good things; and becauſe they are ignorant of the Law of

Reason.

Uſe 1.  
Whence it is that the Papists pleaſe themſelves in their outward obſervances.

Uſe 2.  
Whence it is, that men pleaſe themſelves in their civil carriage.



God, or do not conſider what that requires at their hands, therefore they think themſelves alive to God-ward, and in very good caſe, yea, you ſhall hardly perſwade them that their caſe is miſerable, and that they are in danger of hell and damnation: deal with them, and tell them their caſe is fearful and damnable; and they think it ſtrange, and you bring ſtrange things to their ears. What, they in a bad caſe? they in danger of hell and damnation? Surely no, it cannot be; they thank the Lord, they carry themſelves orderly and civilly, and none can juſtly taxe them with any foul crime, they do no man wrong, they pay every man his own: and therefore ſay what you will, you ſhall never make them believe that they are in a bad caſe, that they are in danger of hell and damnation.

Thus thouſands in the world are conceited of themſelves, not knowing, or at leaſt, not conſidering what the Law and Word of God requires at their hands; they bleſſe themſelves in their civil carriage, and their outward conformity to the Law of God; and ſo, poor ſoules, they deceive themſelves, and they are in a miſerable taking, and indeed, their caſe is far more miſerable, becauſe they ſee not their miſery, and they are hardly brought to take notice of it: it is an harder matter to bring a civil man or woman to a ſight of their miſery, then a Swearer and a Ruſſian: for why? They take themſelves to be in a bleſſed caſe, they think all is well with them, and they are ſuch as Chriſt ſpeaks of, *Luk. 15. 7.* They think they are juſt, and in the favour of God, and they need no repentance; and ſo they go on in a blockiſhneſſe, and without all true ſenſe and feeling of their ſins; and they are like to a man that is dangerously and deadly ſick, and feels not his ſickneſſe, and ſo neglects the means of his recovery, and dyes without remedy. So they are dangerously ſick in their ſouls, and they feel it not, and they go on, neglecting the means of their good, and ſalvation of their ſoules; and ſo their caſe is miſerable, yea, I dare be bold to ſay, either God ſaith not true in his Word (which were blaſphemy once to think) or elſe ſuch as reſt in their civil carriage and behaviour, and think all is well with them, are in a miſerable caſe: for mark what Chriſt ſaith, *Matth. 5. 20. Except your righteousneſſe exceed the righteousneſſe of the Scribes and Pharifees, ye ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven.*

Now what was the righteousneſſe of the Scribes and Pharifees? Surely, an outward conformity to the Law of God, and for that, they were admired, and in reſpect of that, held as petty Angels; and yet Chriſt ſaith, Except our righteousneſſe exceed them, we ſhall never enter into the Kingdom of heaven. And therefore take notice of thy miſerable ſtate and condition, thou that pleaſeſt thy ſelf in thy civil carriage, and thinkeſt all is well with thee. It is through ignorance of the Law and Word of God: or becauſe thou conſidereſt not what the Lord requireth of thee in his Word, and thou doſt but dream that thou art alive to God-ward; when God awakens thee thou ſhalt find thy ſelf in a miſerable caſe, and therefore take notice of it now in time, and know that God in his Word, requires of thee conformity to his Law and Word as well inward as outward, and that thy doing of outward good things, comes from a ſanctified ſoule, and proceed out of a pure heart, good conſcience, and faith unfeigned, and that they be done in conſcience and obedience to the Commandement of God, and with a deſire to pleaſe him, and with a due reſpect to his glory.

In the next place, obſerve we the manner of ſpeaking, the phraſe and form of ſpeech here uſed by the Apoſtle. He ſaith, *I once was alive, without the Law.* And again, that the *Commandement came to him* (and when the *Commandement came*) not meaning that he was altogether without the Law, or that the Law was altogether abſent from him, (for he had the Law, and was inſtructed in it at the feet of *Gamaliel*, *Act. 22. 3.*) but his meaning is this, that he was in former time without the ſound knowledge and underſtanding of the Law, and did not duly and thoroughly conſider it, the Law came to him when he ſoundly underſtood it, and did duly conſider it.

Now



Now the Apostle setting out his want of sound knowledge, and due consideration of the Law of God, under this Phrase and form of speech, *He was without the Law*; and again, *His sound knowledge and through-consideration of the Law*. Under this form of speech, *The Commandement came to him*; we are given to understand thus much:

That men are as without the Law and Word of God, and as if they had not the Law and Word of God, though they hear the sound of it in their ears, when they do not rightly understand it, and duly consider it; such as hear the Law and Gospel, even the whole Word of God, and have it founding in their ears, and do not rightly understand it, and duly consider it, so as they feel the proper and powerful effect and working of it in themselves for their humiliation and comfort; it may be truly said of them, that they are as without the Word of God, they are as if they had not the Word of God at all; as one that is blind, may be said to be without the light of the Sun, though the Sun shine most clearly round about him, and the beams of it fall on his eyes; and as a man that hath riches, and yet hath not the use of them, nor any further profit of them, then the beholding of them with his eyes, *Eccles. 5. 10.* may be said to be as without riches, and as if he had no wealth at all. So they that have the Word of God, and they hear it, they read it, and it may be have some general and confused knowledge of it, and yet have not the right and sound understanding of it, and do not thoroughly consider it, so as they feel the power and working of it in themselves to their humbling and strengthening; certainly they are as without the Word of God, as if they had it not at all.

To this purpose mark what the holy Ghost saith, *Heb. 4. 2.* *The Word that they heard, profited them not, because it was not mixed with faith in those that heard it.* The meaning is this, Because the Jewes, in the time of the old Testament, did not soundly understand the Word of God, the Gospel that they heard, and did not mingle it with faith, because they did not so thoroughly and duly consider it as they ought, even till they came to feel sweetnesse and comfort of it in themselves; therefore it was fruitlesse, it was unprofitable to them, and they were as without the Word of God, and as if they had never had it at all.

*Isai. 28. 9.* We read, that the Prophet contesteth with the people, and blames them exceedingly, that though the Lord had sent his Word unto them by his Prophets, and they had heard it, yet they had no sound knowledge and understanding of it, and he saith, in that regard they were as Babes, and the preaching of it had done them no more good, then as if it had been preached to young Infants: and so it was with them, as if they had been without the preaching of it, and as if they had never heard it at all. *Whom, saith the Prophet, shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand the things that he heareth? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts?*

*2 Tim. 2.* The Apostle having exhorted Timothy constantly to undergo the labours of his calling, and the troubles and afflictions attending on it, *Vers. 7.* he saith, *Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.* As if he had said, All that I have said, is nothing worth, it is as if I had never spoken it, and as if thou hadst never heard it, unlesse thou rightly understand it, and duly consider it, to make thy profit and benefit of it: and therefore understand me aright, and consider what I say, and the Lord give thee that thou maist both rightly understand, and wisely consider what I have said, that may be fit for thy good.

*Joh. 5. 39.* We find, that Christ injoyns a diligent Search of the Scripture, that men should again and again search into the Scriptures; for so the word signifieth: and never rest till they find out the right sense and meaning of them, and be able to make a right use of them to themselves. Christ knowing well, that if men do not so understand the Word, and if they be not able so to make use of it, they are as if they were without the Word, and as if they had it not at all. And the reason of it is this;

#### Doctrine 2.

Men are as without the Law and Word of God, though they hear the sound of it, when they do not rightly understand it, and duly consider it.



Reason.

Howsoever the VVord of God be in it self the Will and Wisdom of God revealed; yet it is not so to them that do not rightly understand it, and rightly apply it. The Word of God, misunderstood, or misapplied by any man, it is not the Word of God to him; though in it self it be, yet to him it is not the Word of God, but his own fancy, and his own conceit. And therefore this must needs be held as a certain truth, that men are as without the VVord of God, though it sound in their ears, and they have some general knowledg of it, when they do not rightly understand it, and duly consider it, so as they feel the proper effect and working of it in themselves.

Use.

We must not rest in the hearing, reading, and general knowledge of the Word of God.

This being a truth, the use of it is for instruction: It must teach us not to content our selves with the hearing of the VVord of God, and the reading of it, though we do often both hear and read it, and with some general knowledg of it; but we must labour for a further matter, even for a right understanding of the VVord of God, that we may be able duly to consider it. And herein many deceive themselves; they rest onely in the hearing of the VVord, and content themselves with some general knowledg: they know onely the outward face and sentence of the VVord, and they are able to repeat it, but they have no sound knowledg of it, they are not acquainted with the inward purpose and meaning of the holy Ghost in it. Poor souls! whosoever they be that thus do, they deceive themselves, and they are as without the VVord of God, and as if they had it not at all, yea, on them is verified that heavy and fearful threatening and judgement denounced, *Isa. 6. 9. They hear, and do not understand they see, and do not perceive.* VVhich is a most heavy judgement of God, worse then famine, plague, or any other outward calamity: For that is a judgement of God on the soul.

Let us not then content our selves with the hearing or reading of the Word of God, and with a general knowledg of it, but labour we for the right understanding of it, and let us never rest till we come to a right understanding of the VVord of God, and be able duly to consider it, yea, so, as we feel the proper effect and working of it in our selves.

Quest.

How is that, may some say? when do we rightly understand the VVord of God, and duly consider it, so as we feel the proper effect of it in our selves?

Answer.

To this I answer: VVhen we are wrought on and affected according to the subject matter of the VVord, when the terrors of the VVord do cast us down, and truly humble us, and the comforts of it do raise us up again with true and sound comfort. For example, when the Law of God brings us to a sight of our sins, even of our particular sins, and to see our selves under the curse of the Law, and under the wrath of God, and at the very gates of hell, in respect of our sins: And the Gospel, that again raiseth us up with comfort touching remission of our sinnes, peace of our consciences, our adoption through Christ to be the sons of God, and it fills our hearts with joy unspeakable and glorious, even with joy in the holy Ghost. And this we are to labour for, and let us never rest till we finde this in our selves: Labour we to find our selves truly humbled by the Law of God; and then raised up again with true and sound comfort by the gospel, and to feel the sweetnesse and comfort of it in our own souls, yea, let us never rest, till we be able to finde the comfort of it in time of trouble and distresse; for the most wicked will seem to finde comfort in the gospel in the time of health, and in the time of prosperity; but let us never rest till we be able to say with *David, Psal. 119. 50. It is my comfort in my trouble: for thy promise hath quickned me.* Then indeed we rightly understand it, and we feel the proper effect of it in our selves: and to help us forward in this, consider we briefly these two things:

First, nothing is able to yield us true comfort in time of trouble and distresse, by onely the VVord of God; and if we be not able to comfort our selves out of the Word of God in our troubles, we either grow impatient, or we become desperate, or we fly to unlawful means: for indeed if men know not God in  
his



his Word, they know not his Mercy, they know not his Truth, his Love and his Goodnesse; and how then can they possibly be comforted in their troubles?

Again, consider we, that Prayer brings a feeling of comfort, and the Sacraments a sealing up of comfort, but it is onely of that comfort we have in the Word of God: If we have no comfort in the Word of God, Prayer brings no feeling of any true comfort, the Sacraments seal up nothing to us, but Judgment and Damnation. If we desire to finde true comfort in time of trouble and distresse, and would have Prayer to bring us to a feeling of true comfort, and the Sacraments to seal up true comfort in our own souls: let us not content our selves with the hearing or reading of the Word of God, and with a general knowledg of it, but labour we, and never let us rest, till we come to a right understanding of the Word, and that we be able duly to consider it, and that we feel the proper effect of the Law in our own hearts, to the humbling of us for our sins: and the gospel raising us up with true comfort; yea, that we are able to find comfort in the gospel intime of our greatest trouble and distresse, then we rightly understand and duly consider it: and if it be not thus with us, we are as without the Word of God, and as if we had it not at all.

Note we further, the Apostle saith, *When the Commandment came*; meaning, that Commandment that forbids Lust, and condemns it; when he came more narrowly to look into that Commandment, and more duely to consider it; thereby intimating, that in former times he did not so narrowly look into that Commandment, nor so thoroughly consider it as he ought. And hence we are taught.

*Doctrine 3.*  
We are carefully to consider every Commandment of God.

That we are to consider, and to look into all and every Commandment of God, even to consider one Commandment of God as well as another and all of them together; for indeed *he that breaks one Commandment, is guilty of all, Jam. 2. 10.* And there is the same Law-giver of one Commandment, as well as of another; he that said, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*, as it followeth, *Vers. 11.* said also, *Thou shalt not kill*, &c. And the least breach of any Commandment, is a sin against God, even against the infinite Majesty of God, and so deserves the wrath of God and everlasting perdition.

*Use.*  
They deceive themselves, that look to some of the Commandments, and not unto the other

And therefore we are carefully to consider all and every Commandment of God, and to look to one Commandment as well as to another: and therefore they deceive themselves, who look to some of the Commandments, and not to the other, and are careful to avoid the breach of some Commandments, and not of the other.

Art thou no Thief, no Murderer, no Adulterer, no Swearer, and such like? and yet art thou a Sabbath breaker, or the like? thou deceivest thy self: thou canst find no true comfort in so doing. *David saith, Psal. 119. 6. He shall not be confounded, when he had respect to all the Commandments of God.* Thus must we do, we must have respect to all the Commandments of God, and we must be careful to obey God in all his Commandments, otherwise we shall finde no true comfort nor peace to our own souls.

Now further, in that the Apostle saith, that whereas before without the Law he thought himself alive, and on the coming of the Commandment sin revived, and he dyed, his meaning being this, that when he came to a true understanding of the Commandment of God that forbids lust, and more thoroughly to consider that Commandment, then the corruption of his nature shewed forth the life of it: it began then to stir, to work, and to accuse him, and then he found himself in respect of his spiritual state, as a dead man, he saw himself guilty of sin, and so under the curse of the Law. Hence we are given to understand thus much:

*Doctrine 4.*  
Sound knowledge of the Law of God, brings men to a sight of inward corruption.

That the sound knowledge and due consideration of the Law of God brings men to a sight of inward corruption, it makes men see that corruption in themselves they saw not before, and it makes that to accuse them and to condemn them.



them; such as carry themselves civilly and orderly, and are of civil carriage and good behaviour, if so be they look into the Law of God, and duly consider that, and compare themselves with that, they shall see themselves vile wretches, and they shall see their souls polluted and defiled with many foul and grosse sins which they saw not before their careful looking into the Law of God, and their due consideration of that, will bring them to a sight of many foul hidden corruptions, and to a sight of such sins as they saw not before.

Thus it was with the Apostle, when he had no sound knowledge and due consideration of the Law of God, he thought himself alive, and in very good case, but when he came more narrowly to look into the Law of God, and throughly to consider that, then he saw the filthiness and corruption of his own heart; then he saw himself guilty of sin, which before he had no sight of then the lust of his heart shewed forth the life of it, both in stirring and working, and in accusing; his conscience was then touched with that which never troubled him before.

And thus we read of the Jewes, *Acts* the second, before Peter preached to them, they were secure, they had no manner of inward touch of conscience for that foul sin of crucifying Christ the Lord of life: no, it is said, *Vers. 13. They mocked at PETER and others, and said they were full of new wine.* But when Peter preached to them the Law, and laid before them the Word of God discovering their sin, and they heard it, and did ponder on it, and throughly consider it, the Text saith, *Vers. 37. They were pricked in their hearts, and said unto PETER and the other Apostles, Men and Bretheren, what shall we do?* Then they were brought to a sight of that sin which they saw not before, and the sight of it did amaze them, and smite their hearts with bitter vexation.

And hence it is, that the Apostle saith, *1 Cor. 14. 24, 25.* that the Word of God discovering sin, being truly preached, the ignorant man and unbeliever, one that hath no sight of the hidden corruption of his own heart, hearing it and duly considering it, he findes his sin rebuked, his conscience judged, and the secret corruption of his heart made manifest, and he comes to see that in himself, which he saw not before, he is rebuked, and so the secrets of his heart are manifest: And indeed the reason of it is this.

Reason.

The Law of God being the perfect rule of righteousness, and requiring exact and perfect obedience to Gods will, revealed as well in mans nature, as in his actions, and forbidding the contrary, it is as a glasse that will plainly shew what men are both within and without, what they are both in their hearts, and lives, and that without flattery and without partiality: and therefore it must needs be a truth, that if men soundly understand, and duly consider the Law of God, it will certainly bring them to a sight of inward corruption, and make them see that corruption in themselves which they saw not before; and, if men carefully look into the Law of God, and compare themselves with that, they shall see their soules filthy, and defiled with many foul and grosse corruptions and sins which they saw not before.

Use 1.

Whence it is that many see not the inward corruptions of their own hearts.

By this, in the first place we may easily see, whence it is that many in the world see not the inward lusts and corruptions of their own hearts, their hearts abound with many grosse corruptions and lusts, and they are full of envy, of pride, of covetousness, they are self-conceited, they are earthly-minded, they are set on the world and the things of it, even to seek their own ease, pleasure, profit, and the like, and they see not these corruptions and lusts, their consciences are never troubled with them, they go lightly under the burden, and why? Surely, here is the cause of it, they do not soundly understand the Law of God, at least, they consider it not as they ought, they never lay their hearts to the rule, even to the Law of God; and that is the cause that they see not the foul and grosse corruptions of them. And hence it is, that such persons as most carefully look into the Law of God, and most duly compare themselves with that, do most



moſt of all others ſee their own inward corruptions, and are moſt of all humbled under the weight of them:

The world thinks, that ſuch as they call Puritanes, hold themſelves pure and free from ſin. But (alas) they are deceived, they, of all others, do moſt of all ſee their own inward corruptions, and do moſt of all groane under the burden of them, they ſee the vanity of their mindes, the rebellion of their wills, and that their affections are exceedingly diſcovered, and they have much ado with their own hearts, and they often complain of their ſinful infirmities, and why? Be-  
 cauſe indeed they ſoundly underſtand the Law of God, and duly and thoroughly conſider it, and that brings them to a ſight of inward corruption, and makes them ſee thoſe corruptions and ſins in themſelves, which the world takes no notice of. And they find it true in them that *Solomon* ſpeaks, *Pro. 20. 9. Who can ſay. I have made mine heart cleon. I am cleon from my ſin?* that is, I am without all reliques of natural corruption. They find themſelves vile wretches, in regard of their ſins, becauſe they look narrowly into the Law of God, and compare themſelves with it.

And ſo for a ſecond uſe of this doctrine. Is it ſo, that ſome underſtanding and due conſideration of the Law of God will certainly bring men to a ſight of inward corruption, and make them ſee that corruption in themſelves which they ſaw not before? Surely then, if we would know our ſelves what we are as well within as without, and not deceive our ſelves nor pleaſe our ſelves in a falſe conceit, we muſt look to our ſelves in the glaſſe of Gods Law. If thou wouldſt be acquainted with thine own heart, and willingly ſee the hidden corruption of it, even that which thou ſeeſt not in thy ſelf, and as yet never troubled thee, then bring thine heart to the rule, the Law of God, and compare thy ſelf with that, and that will certainly diſcover to thee the foul and ugly face of thine own heart, and let thee ſee that there is nothing but vanity in thy minde, rebellion in thy will, and a confuſed diſorder in all thy affections: that there is nothing in thee of thy ſelf, but the ugly ſhape of the Devil, and that will drive thee from ſelf-love, and ſelf-liking, and out of all conceit of thy ſelf; yea, it will make thee not onely deny thy ſelf, as Chriſt commands, but even to abhor thy ſelf, repenting in duſt and aſhes, as *Job* did, *Job 42. 6.* Yea the more narrowly thou lookeſt into the Law of God, and the more thou doſt compare thy ſelf with that, the more more vile thou wilt ſee thy ſelf, and the more will the filthineſſe and corruption of thine heart appear to thee. And therefore if thou deſire to be thoroughly acquainted with thine own ſelf, and wouldſt ſee as well what is within thee as without thee, that thou mayeſt be truly humbled for thy corruptions and ſins of thine heart, as well as thy life, which is the onely way to true comfort and peace of conſcience: then labour for ſound underſtanding of the Law of God, and duly and thoroughly conſider that, and compare thy ſelf with that; that is the way to that thou deſireſt.

Further obſerve we that the *Apoſtle* ſaith, *When the Commandment came, ſin revived* and not onely ſo, but he adds, *That he dyed*, the Commandment of God being ſoundly underſtood, and duly conſidered of him, the corruption of his heart, which before lay hid, began ſtrongly to accuſe him, and then he ſaw himſelf guilty of ſin, which before he ſaw not, and not onely ſo, but thereupon alſo he found himſelf, in regard of his ſpiritual condition, in a miſerable caſe, as a dead man, under the curſe of the Law and wrath of God, lyable to eternal death and damnation. Hence we are plainly taught,

That the Law of God doth not onely diſcover ſin, and make men to ſee their ſins; but it ſerves alſo to kill men, and to make them as dead men, in regard of their ſins; it ſhewes men their ſins, and it makes men ſee and feel themſelves as dead men, and in a moſt wretched caſe, by reaſon of their ſins: the Law of God diſcovers to men their ſins they ſaw not before, and withall on a true ſight and feeling of them, it ſtrikes them as it were dead, it works in them terror, and fear, dread, and amazement, and a fearful expectation of Gods wrath and vengeance, and ſo they are as dead men while they live; and hence is the Law

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#### Uſe 2.

How men may come to know themſelves what they are within as well as without.

#### Doctrine 5.

The Law of God diſcovers to men their ſins, and their wretchedneſſe, by reaſon of them.



1 Cor. 15. 56.

called a *killing Letter*, 2 Cor. 3. 6. and the *ministration of death*, Verſ. 7. the *ministry of condemnation*, Verſ. 9. Yea hence it is ſaid to be the *ſtrength of ſin*, 1 Cor. 15. 56. it not only makes ſin known, but it gives ſtrength to it, to accuſe and to condemn; and ſo it is the ſtrength of ſin, Gal. 3. 21. the Apoſtle ſaith, *The Law is a School-maſter to bring men to Chriſt*. How doth the Law as a School-maſter bring men to Chriſt? Surely thus; it ſhewes them their ſins, and withall it wounds their hearts, and fills them with terror and fear, and a fearful looking for of the wrath of God, and ſhewes them no remedy in it ſelf; and ſo it drives them from it ſelf to Chriſt: and thus the Law makes men ſee and feel themſelves as dead men, and in a moſt miſerable caſe in regard of their ſins; the reaſons of it are theſe:

Reasons. I.

First, the Law both diſcovers ſin, and what ſin alſo deſerves; it makes men both ſee wherein they offend God, and what the offence of God alſo deſerves, even the curſe of God, and wrath of God, and everlaſting deſtruction both of body and ſoul. And again,

2.

Secondly, it makes the conſcience accuſe for ſin, and to apprehend the wrath of God for ſin; and therefore it makes men, on the true ſight and feeling of their ſins, to ſee and feel themſelves in a moſt miſerable caſe, and even as dead men, though they be yet alive: and this is to be obſerved of us.

Uſe 1.

Difference between the Law and the Goſpel, in regard of the effect of them diſcovered.

It ſerves firſt, for the uſe of it, to diſcover to us a manifeſt difference between the Law and the Goſpel, in regard of the effect and working of them: the Law works terror, fear, and dread; and the Goſpel, that works comfort, joy, and peace: the law diſcovers ſin, and what ſin deſerves, and wounds the ſoul, and works Legal Repentance, properly called Penitence, or Contrition, which differs from Evangelicall Repentance, that Repentance that is wrought by the Goſpel, which is a turning from ſin, to God, or a thorow change of the purpoſe of heart, and courſe of life, from evil to good, as the Law differs from the Goſpel; and this is that that deceives ſome, they cannot diſtinguiſh between theſe two, they cannot put a difference between Penitence or Contrition, which is the effect of the Law; and Repentance or turning from ſin, to God, or a thorow change of the purpoſe of heart, and courſe of life, from evil to good, which is the proper effect of the Goſpel; and ſo they deceive themſelves.

Difference between Penitence and Repentance.

Note.

“Penitence or Contrition may be, and is many times in the reprobate; it was in *Cain* and in *Judas*, they were brought on the ſight and feeling of their ſins, to ſee and feel themſelves in a miſerable and deſperate caſe, and were filled with terror, and fear, and amazement, and a fearful expectation of Gods wrath and vengeance: but Repentance properly taken, is never found in any but true believers: In them onely is found a turning from ſin, to God, and a thorow change of the purpoſe of the heart, and courſe of life, from evil to good; and that is the proper effect and work of the Goſpel.

Uſe 2.

What we are to find in our ſelves, on the ſight of our ſins.

For further uſe of the point. Is it ſo, that the Law of God makes men, on the ſight and feeling of their ſins, to ſee and feel themſelves in a miſerable caſe, even as dead men, while they are yet alive? Is this the proper effect of the Law? Let us then look, that we find this effect in our ſelves, on the ſight of our ſins; when we are brought to a ſight of our ſins, let us look that we find our ſelves as dead men, and as it were at the very gates of hell. It is a dangerous thing when a man is touched by the Word of God, and his ſins are diſcovered by the miniſtery of the Word, then to ſet a good face on the matter, and to bite in all tokens of Repentance and Contrition, becauſe he would not ſeem to be touched with the Word, or that the Word came ſo neer him. They that thus harden their hearts, are in danger never to repent. Theſe two go together, Rom. 2. 5. *Thou, after thine hardneſſe, and heart that cannot repent, beaſteſt unto thyſelf Wrath againſt the day of wrath, and of the declaration of the juſt Judgement of God*. And therefore take we heed of this. I will here ſtand awhile to ſhew the variety of acceptation of the word (*Repentance*) in Scripture. How it is taken divers wayes in the Book of God, which ſome not diſcerning, or not obſerving, deceive



deceive themselves, And first we find, that the word (*Repentance*) is sometimes taken only for grief of heart or mind, in respect of things done amisse, in respect of some evil committed; it signifieth only sorrow, anguish, and vexation of heart and soul, and that the heart is displeased for some thing done, which is called Contrition of heart. Thus it is taken, *Mar. 1. 15.* where Christ saith, *Repent and believe the Gospel*: that is, Be humbled, be sorry for your former wicked lives, and let your hearts be grieved and broken in you for your sins past, and believe the Gospel. Thus also is it taken, *Luk. 10. 13.* *They had a great while ago repented, sitting in sack-cloth and ashes*: that is, They had long since been humbled and grieved for their sins, and had testified their sorrow, by sitting in sack-cloth and ashes. *Act. 8. 22.* *Repent therefore of this thy wickednesse*: that is, Be humbled, and let thine heart be grieved for this thy wickednesse. *So 2 Cor. 12. 21.* *I fear, saith the Apostle, when I come again, my God abase me among you, and I shall bewail many of them which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleannesse, and fornication, and wantonnesse which they have committed*: that is, They have not bewailed, grieved and sorrowed for it. *Ier. 8. 6.* *No man repented of his wickednesse, saying, what have I done?* that is, No man was displeased with himself, and no man said, alas, what have I done? And so in many other places we find, that Repentance is taken for sorrow, grief, and vexation of heart for things done amisse, and for the breaking of the heart. thus *Heb. 6. 1.* and thus it is said that *Indas* repented, *Matth. 27. 3.* Did *Judas* repent? did he turn from his sin to God? Nay rather, he ran from God, he was full of horror, fear, anguish, and grief, he was sorry for that he had done, and overwhelmed with horror.

Again, the word (*Repentance*) sometimes in Scripture signifies not onely contrition of heart, but it compriseth also under it the whole conversion of a sinner, and it signifies both contrition and sorrow for sin, and faith in Christ, and a thorow turning from sin to God. Thus *Mar. 1. 4.* It is said, *John* preached the baptisme of Repentance for remission of sins, that is, he preached that men should be humbled for their sins, and believe in Christ, and thorowly turn to God, and so repenting, and so believing in Christ, that they should be baptized, and thereby testifie and seal up the remission of their sins.

Divers accepti-  
ons of the  
word (*Repentance*.)

And that under Repentance, faith in Christ is here to be understood, it is cleer, *Act. 19. 4.* where *Paul* saith, *JOHN* baptized with the baptisme of Repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe in him which should come after him, that is, in *Jesus Christ*. Thus *Mat. 9. 13.* Christ saith, that he came not to call the righteous, but the sinners to Repentance: meaning this, to turn sinners from sin to God, that they might be converted, and believe in him, and be saved, as *1 Tim. 1. 15.* The Apostle saith, *This a true saying, and by all means worthy to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.* And we read, *Act. 26. 20.* that repenting and turning to God are joyned and put together, as one expounding the other, but shewed first, that they should repent and turn to God. And to this purpose we might bring many other testimonies, where Repentance is put, to signifie not onely Contrition of heart, but faith also in Christ, and a thorow turning from sin to God.

Thirdly, the word (*Repentance*) is sometimes put, to signifie the works of Repentance, or new obedience, as *Revel. 2. 5.* saith Christ to the Church of Ephesus, *Repent and do thy first works.* Where he expounds what he means by the word *Repent*, namely, doing of the first works.

Fourthly, the word (*Repentance*) is sometimes in Scripture put for the good things that follow true conversion, and turning to God, and believing in Christ, *Act. 5. 31.* *Peter* and the other Apostles say, that God lift up Christ with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance to Israel: that is, to give Israel reconciliation with God, and to give them his holy Spirit. So *Act. 11. 18.* the Church speaks thus in *Peters* Apologie, in going to the Gentiles: *Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto life*: that is, accepted them



for his, and made them also members of his Church, and adopted them for his children.

Thus we see, not to add any more, though more might be added, that the word (*Repentance*) is diversly taken in the Scripture, and hath not alwaies one and the same signification: and this is that which deceives such as cannot, or at least will not distinguish of things that differ; they think it ever to be taken in the same sence and signification, and so they deceive themselves.

Now whereas I said, that Repentance properly taken, (that is) a turning from sin to God, or a thorow change of the purpose of the heart, and course of life from evil to good, is never found in any but in true believers, and so must needs follow faith in Christ, in the order of nature, and must needs be the proper effect and fruit of the gospel; I confirm that position, and make it good by these reasons:

Reasons, proving Repentance properly taken, to follow faith in the order of nature.

First, no man repents soundly, that is, soundly turns from sin to God, unless he deny himself, and hates sin from his heart, and willingly imbraces true holinesse and righteousness: And this none can or will in any measure perform, unless he be regenerate; for no unregenerate person hates sin from his heart; and none is regenerate, unless he be in Christ; and none is in Christ unless he embrace Christ by a true justifying and saving faith; and true justifying faith is ever grounded and fastned on the promise of the gospel, touching Gods free grace and favour in Christ, and free remission of sins: and so, without question it is the proper effect of the gospel; and therefore it must needs be, that true, sound, and saving Repentance follows faith in Christ, and is the proper effect and fruit of the gospel.

a Mar. 16. 16.  
Act. 2. 41.  
b Luk. 3. 3.  
c Act. 2. 38.

Secondly, Baptisme is doubtlesse a Sacrament of the new Testament, and of the Covenant of Grace and of the Gospel onely, and it seals up that faith that is wrought by the preaching of the gospel, as appears in many places of a Scripture. And Baptisme is also a sign and seal of true Repentance. *b Iohn came preaching the baptisme of Repentance for the remission of sins, c Amend your lives and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the holy Ghost.* And therefore Baptisme belonging onely to the gospel, and sealing that faith that is wrought by the preaching of the gospel, and that being also a seal of Repentance, it cannot be, but that true Repentance is the proper effect and fruit of the gospel, and follows true faith in Christ.

Thirdly, sound and saving Repentance, and the promise of grace and remission of sins, are inseparable, they ever go together, and the promise of Grace and remission of sins is made to such as apprehend Christ the Mediator, by true saving faith, and that promise is propounded onely in the gospel; and therefore true and sound Repentance is the proper effect and fruit of the gospel, and follows faith in Christ.

Fourthly, and lastly, the Scripture doth expressly refer the preaching of true saving Repentance, onely to the gospel, as *Isa. 61. 1: The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, therefore hath the Lord anointed me, he hath sent me to preach good tidings unto the poor, and bind up the broken-hearted, and to preach liberty to the captives, and to them that are bound, the opening of prison.* Mat. 3. 2. *Repent; for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Mat. 9. 13. *I am not come to call the righteous, but the sinners to Repentance.* And therefore true saving Repentance is the proper effect and fruit of the gospel, and follows true saving faith in Christ.

These reasons do sufficiently evince the truth of this Position, that Repentance properly taken, namely, a turning from sin to God, or a thorow change of the purpose of heart and course of life from evil to good, is never found in any but in true believers; and so is the proper effect and fruit of the gospel, and follows true saving and justifying faith in Christ. And these may satisfie any that is not willfully blind and wedded to his own idle and self-pleasing conceit.

One thing is further offered unto us from the phrase and form of speech here used



uled. In that the Apoſtle ſaith, *Sin revived and he died*: In that he tels us that ſin reviving, that is, ſin now accusing him, and his conſcience now being touched, and troubled with the ſight of ſin, which he ſaw not before, thereupon he died he found himſelf as a dead man. Hence we are further given to underſtand thus much:

That the accusation of the conſcience for ſin, is a moſt fearful thing, the terror of a guilty conſcience, of a conſcience awakened, and now ſeeing and feeling the guilt of ſin, and terrified and affrighted for ſin, is a moſt heavy thing, it is even as a death, it is of all evils and miſeries that can befall a man in this world, the greateſt. And to this purpoſe *Solomon* ſpeaks plainly, *Pro. 18. 14.* ſaith he, The ſpirit of man will ſuſtain his infirmity: but a wounded ſpirit who can bear it. The mind of man being ſound and whole, will enable him to bear in ſome meaſure with patience, diſeaſes of body, or any outward calamity: but a wounded ſpirit, the wound of the ſoul, the horror of a guilty and accusing conſcience who can bear it? That is a thing unſufferable, no man or woman in the world is able to endure that, and to bear that. And this we may ſee in the example of *Cain* of *Judas*, of *Belſhazar*, and many others in the Book of God.

*Doctrine 6.*  
The terror of a guilty conſcience is moſt fearful.

*Cain* being purſued with the terrors of a guilty conſcience, he ran up and down as a rogue, as a Vagabond as a Runagate in the earth *Gen. 4. 14.* And *Belſhazar* being in the miſt of his cups carrowſing, and in the miſt of his mirth and jollity, and ſeeing the hand-writing on the wall, and that awakeing his conſcience, and terrifying and affrighting him; the Text ſaith, *His countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him ſo, that the joynts of his loynes were looſed, and his knees ſmote one againſt another. Dan. 5. 6.* And we know, that *Judas* being galled with the gripes of a guilty conſcience, his conſcience accusing him for his ſin, he never reſted till he made a diſpatch of himſelf; *He went and hanged himſelf, Matth. 27. 5.* Yea, we ſee many times in woful experience, that ſome that are purſued with the galls and terrors of a guilty conſcience, they never reſt till they have laid violent hands on themſelves, and they ſeek for death more then treaſures, *Job. 3. 21.* And that ſhewes plainly that the accusation of the conſcience for ſin, and the horror of a guilty conſcience is a moſt fearful thing, and of all evils in this world the greateſt. And the reaſons of it are theſe:

*Reasons. 1.*

First, the conſcience of man or woman accusing for ſin, and being terrified on the ſight of ſin, it apprehends the wrath of God, and looks for nothing but the execution of his wrath, and powring out of his vengeance in full meaſure on body and ſoul. As a malefactor that is juſtly condemned, and hath heard the ſentence of death given againſt him, looks every hour for execution, and on the apprehenſion of that, is ſo amazed, as that he is rather like a dead man, then a living: ſo is it with one whoſe conſcience accuseth him, and and terrifies him for ſin, and thereupon apprehends the wrath of God for the ſame.

Again, the horror of a guilty conſcience accusing for ſin, and terrifying and affrighting for ſin, is one part of helliſh torment. *Iſa. 66. 24.* *The worm of conſcience in hell ſhall never dye.* And therefore it muſt needs be moſt true, that the horror of a guilty conſcience, of a conſcience accusing for ſin, is a moſt fearful thing, it is as death, yea, more dreadful then the death of the body, and of all evils in this world it is the greateſt.

*Use.*

The folly of moſt in the world diſcovered.

Now then, this being a truth, in the firſt place it ſerves to diſcover the folly & miſdeſſe of the moſt in the world, who care little or nothing to pull this evil on themſelves: moſt men are careful to prevent other evils, they are very and circumspect, leſt they ſhould fall into poverty, or ſickneſſe, or be caſt into priſon, or the like: but where is almoſt any man or woman, that is careful to prevent the evil of an accusing conſcience, of all evils in the world, the greateſt? Few there be that take any paines that way; nay, moſt men, as it were with both hands, hale and pull that evil on themſelves;

they



they wittingly and wilfully rash into known sins, and wilfully go on in known sins.

For example ; do not many know that Garishnesse of apparel is a sin ? and yet they wilfully go on in that sin. And do not many know that Usury is a sin ? and yet they wilfully practise it, and make a trade of it. And so for Drunkennesse, Common Swearing, &c. Do not many know these to be foul sins ? and yet they wilfully go on in the practice of them. Poor souls ! thus doing, they pull on themselves the greatest evil in the world, the wound and horror of a guilty conscience. And when the Lord shall let loose the cord of their conscience, and cause that to accuse them, they shall find themselves, as it were, in hell, and they shall feel the flames of hell flashing up in their owne souls ; yea such as now are fool-hardy, and desperately bold to commit sin, and say they care not what can be threatened against them ; when the Lord comes to reckon with them, and awakens their conscience, they shall find themselves most of all others affrighted and terrified, and they shall then wish for death, and seek for it as for treasures, and think thereby to ease themselves : but (alas) all in vain ; for death shall plunge their souls into everlasting torment.

And if the horror of a guilty conscience be in this life so grievous, oh then, how grievous is it in hell, and therefore take we heed how we pull that evil on our selves ; rather labour we to prevent it. And if thou wouldst know how, In a word remember these things.

First, examine thy self, call thy self to account for thy sins past, be humbled for them, and never rest suing for mercy, till thou get the pardon of them, and be assured of it by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. And

Secondly, take heed thou pierce not thy soul with any known sin.

And if thou carefully use these two means, thou shalt through Gods mercy prevent the evil of an accusing conscience.

Again, is it so, that that the horror of an accusing conscience, is the greatest evil in the world ? Then, if we see any lye under the trouble of an accusing conscience, we are to pity them, and to put on tender bowels towards them : it ought to be far from us to despise, to reproach, or to laugh at them. The case may be our own, and therefore let us pity them, and be compassionate towards them pray for them, and comfort them, and do them what good we shal be able.

Use 2.  
We are to pity them that lye under the trouble of an accusing conscience.

#### VERS. 10.

*And the same Commandment which was ordained unto life, was found to be unto me unto death.*



His Verse depends on the former, as a further setting forth of the *Apostles* dead state and condition, in respect of the Law : for the *Apostle* having said in the Verse before, that *on the Commandment, sin revived, and he dyed* : here he further amplifies that state and condition of his, by making known the proper end and use of the Law, which was contrary to that he found ; and he further shews, that he was indeed as a dead man on the coming of the Commandment, yea, on the coming of the Commandment that was ordained to another end and purpose, that even the same Commandment that was ordained to life, that being the natural and proper end and use of it, he found to be to him to death. *And the same Commandment* (saith the *Apostle*) *which was ordained unto life, was found to be unto me unto death* :

So then, here the *Apostle* layes before us,

2. First, the proper and natural end and use of the Law of God, that it was ordained unto life.

1. Secondly, that he found it to be of contrary use to him, that he found it to himself



himſelf to be to death, And he gives the reaſon of this in the Verſe following.

*And the ſame Commandment.*] The Word Commandment, is doubtleſſe here to be taken, as in the Verſe before; the *Apoſtle* ſtill going on in the ſame argument and matter: and his meaning is this, And that Commandment that forbids luſt, and condemns it, even that ſame Commandment which was ordained unto life, was found to be unto me unto death. The word (*ordained*) we find not in the Text original, nor any word answering to it; for the Text runs thus, *And the Commandment, even that ſelf ſame Commandment that was unto life.* But indeed it may well be ſupplied, the Text requiring it as needful for the right underſtanding of it, the meaning being this:

That Commandment that was given and appointed of God to this end and purpoſe, namely unto life. The Word (*Life*) here ſignifies not onely eternal life and ſalvation, propounded and promiſed to the perfect doers of the Law of God, even to ſuch as ſhould perfectly obſerve and do all things commanded in the Law of God, and avoid all evils therein forbidden, according to that, *Levit. 18. 5. Ye ſhall keep my Statutes and my Judgements, which if a man do, he ſhall then live in them; I am the Lord.* Which is cited by the Apoſtle, *Rom. 10. 5.* where he ſaith, *Moses* deſcribes the righteouſneſſe which is of the Law, that the man which doth theſe things, ſhall live thereby: I ſay the word (*Life*) doth not onely ſignifie that life, namely, eternal life and ſalvation, but it ſignifieth alſo tranquillity of mind and conſcience, peace and comfort, and the well being of the ſoul in this life: for that is agreeable to the context and preſent purpoſe of the Apoſtle, as I ſhewed Verſe before, when he ſaid he was alive. We are thus to underſtand him, that he was at quiet and peace in himſelf, he thought himſelf, in regard of his ſpiritual ſtate exceeding well, and in very good caſe; and ſo indeed the word (*Life*) is here to be taken, not onely for eternal life and ſalvation, but alſo for peace, comfort, tranquillity of mind and conſcience, and the well being of the ſoul in this life.

*Was found*, that is, of me my ſelf, it fell out and it proved to be to me to death, and I found it ſo. Now the word (*Death*) is here oppoſed to the word *life* before expreſſed, and it ſignifies not onely eternal death and damnation, but alſo diſquietneſſe, and trouble of mind and conſcience, and a wretched miſerable caſe in this life. And ſo the meaning of thoſe words (*was found*) is this; It fell out and proved to be to me to the diſquiet and trouble of mind and conſcience, and made me liable to eternal death and damnation, and I found it ſo to be to me.

Thus then conceive we the meaning of the Apoſtle in the words of this Verſe, as if he had ſaid.

*And that Commandment of God that forbids luſt, and condemns it, even that ſelf ſame Commandment that was given and ordained of God, for the good of ſuch as ſhould yield perfect obedience to it, even for the tranquillity of their minds and conſciences, and for the peace comfort and well being of their ſouls in this world, and for their eternal happineſſe in the world to come, fell out and proved to be to me, to the diſquiet and to the trouble of my mind and conſcience, and made me lyable to eternal death and damnation, and I found it to be ſo to me.*

Here firſt obſerve we, that the Apoſtle ſaith, *That Commandment of God*, even that ſelf ſame Commandment that God gave and ordained to life, fell out to him to death, and was found to be to him to the diſcomfort of his ſoul in this world, and to make him lyable to eternal death and damnation in the world to come. Whence we eaſily take up this concluſion,

That the Word of God, even that the Word that God gave, and appointed to be a Word of life and ſalvation; the ſame Word becomes to many, a word of death and damnation, and is found ſo to be to many; and that very Word of God, that is by Gods appointment, in the true and proper uſe of it, a word of life and ſalvation, is found to be to many, a Word of death and damnation. The Apoſtle here affirms it of the Law of God, and it is true alſo of the goſpel.



Though God gave the gospel, and ordained it for the bringing of men to believe in Christ, and so to life and salvation, and it is his arm and power to salvation, *Rom. 1. 16.* yet to many it turns to hurt, even to their death and damnation: yea, the point may be general, and may thus be conceived:

*Doctrine 1.*  
The same things that by Gods appointment, in the proper use of them, are for the good of men, fall out to many to their evil.

That the self-same things, that by Gods appointment, in the true and proper use of them, are for the good of men, those turn to the hurt and to the evil of many, and fall out to many to their evil. And this may be further cleared by many particulars: as,

First, the Word of God, even the sweet and saving Word of God, that Word that God hath ordained to bring men to life and salvation, that is found to some *the savour of death and of damnation, 2 Cor. 2. 16.*

So the Sacraments, which by Gods appointment, in the true and proper use of them, are seals of the Covenant of grace, they prove to some to be seals of judgement and damnation.

The holy Angels, by Gods appointment, are ministring spirits for the good of the heires of salvation, *Heb. 1. 14.* And yet they are found to be to many, executioners of Gods wrath and vengeance, as to *Pharaoh*, to *Saneherib*, and other such like.

So, wit, honor, commendation amongst men, riches, and the like, are, by Gods appointment, in the true and proper use of them, for the good of men. and yet they are found to many, to be to their evil and to their bane; as *Achitophels* wit was found to be his ruine, *Hamans* honour and his advancement turned to his fearful downfal; and *Herods* applause given him by the people, *Act. 12.* was turned to his utter destruction: and many finde their wealth and outward prosperity to be their ruine, *Psal. 69. 22.* And as *Solomon* saith, *Prov. 1. 32. Ease slayeth the foolish, and the prosperity of fools destroyeth them.*

I might instance in many other particulars, and shew that the same things, that by Gods appointment, in the true and proper use of them, are for the good of men, are found to be to the hurt of many, and fall out to many to their evil: and the reasons of it are these:

*Reasons. 1.*

First, many are not capable of that good, that is to be found in such things as God hath ordained to be for the good of men, in the true and proper use of them, being unregenerate, and as yet in their natural state and condition, and being not in Covenant with God: for as *all things work together for the best, unto them that love God, even to them that are called of his purpose, Rom. 8. 28.* So all things work together for the worst, to those that are yet unregenerate; and so they are not capable of that good that God ordaines to be in the true use of good things.

2. Again; Secondly, many have in their hearts such extreme poyson, as it poysons every thing they meet withal. As a bad stomach turns the best meat into bad humours: so their corrupt hearts do corrupt and poyson every thing they have, and every thing they meddle withal, and they pervert good things, and turn them to a wrong use; and the better gifts they have of body, mind, or outward state, the worse they are, perverting and abusing those good gifts. And therefore this we may resolve on as a certain truth, that the same things that by Gods appointment, in the true and proper use of them, are for the good of men, are found to be to the hurt of many, and fall out to many to their evil and to their hurt.

*Use. 1.*  
Many men in the top of their happinesse, are full of misery.

This being a truth, it serves first, to discover to us, that many men in the top of their happinesse, as they count it, that is, in the midst of their plenty and store of good things, even of things good in themselves, and good in the true and proper use of them, are notwithstanding full of misery; for why? many times even those good things that men injoy in abundance, are found to be to their hurt, and to their evil; yea, many times to their bane, and to their destruction. For example: men enjoy abundance of wealth and outward things, which by Gods appointment, in the true and proper use of them, are for the good of men, yet



yet they, through the poyſon of their own hearts, abuſe thoſe good things to pride, to wantonneſſe, to oppreſſing of others that are not ſo rich as they : and ſo thoſe good things are made instruments and means of evil to them. and are found to be to them to their hurt, even to the haſtning of Gods puniſhing hand on them in this world, and, without repentance, to the aggravating and increaſing of their wo, and judgment, and damnation in hell : and therefore in the midſt of their happineſſe, (as they eſteem it) they are moſt wretched and miſerable.

Again, is it ſo, that the ſame things that by Gods appointment, in the true and proper uſe of them, are for the good of men, are found to be to the hurt of many and to their evil ? Surely, then this muſt teach us, not to reſt in the having and enjoying of good things, whether the good things of this life, or the good things of the life to come, and think our ſelves happy and bleſſed of God, if we have and enjoy good things ; for ſo we may deceive our ſelves : thoſe good things may be to our hurt and to our evil. And herein many deceive themſelves ; they think, if they have good things, they are happy ; and if they have abundance of wealth, they bleſſe themſelves, and think certainly they are bleſſed of God, and ſtick not ſometimes to ſay, that God hath bleſſed them with ſuch and ſuch things, and they doubt not but that they are in the favour of God, and it ſhall go well with them. Poor ſoules ! they may deceive themſelves ; thou mayſt have abundance of Corn, Wine, and Oyl, which indeed are by Gods appointment for the good of men, *Pſal. 104. 15.* and yet have no true comfort in thoſe things, but find them to be to thy hurt and to thy bane, and *reſerved to thee for thy evil, Eccleſ. 5. 12.* For why ? it may be the Lord hath given thee wealth, and abundance of outward things, in wrath and judgment, not in mercy ; as thus, It may be he hath given them as thy portion, *Pſal. 17. 14.* and thou art to look for no other good from his hand, yea, he hath given them for thy fattening *againſt the day of ſlaughter, Jam. 5. 5.* for increaſe of thy judgment and condemnation ; and the more thou haſt, the more art thou to be accountable for at the day of Judgment, and the heavier ſhall be thy judgment and condemnation : and therefore reſt not in the having of good things, and think that therefore thou art bleſſed of God. No, no ; we are not to reſt in the having of good things that belong to life and ſalvation, in having the Goſpel and the means of ſalvation ; thou mayſt have the Goſpel and enjoy the means of ſalvation, and yet find them to be to thy hurt and deeper condemnation, yea, one day nothing more galling thy conſcience, then the ſweet and comfortable doctrine of the Goſpel.

“ *Ask a conſcience deſpairing of Gods mercy, what comfort it finds in the ſweet promiſes of the Goſpel ? and it will tell you, None at all ;* and therefore we are not to reſt in the having of good things of this life, or belonging to the life to come, and think our ſelves happy if we have them : but labour we for a further matter, that thoſe good things may be found to be to our good, that we may find true comfort in them.

How is that, may ſome ſay ? Surely thus, we muſt never reſt, till we find that we have part in the merit of Chriſt, and that the good things that we enjoy, are tokens and pledges of Gods love towards us in and through him.

And ſecondly, we muſt labour for grace in our hearts to make a right uſe of thoſe good things, that we may uſe them to the glory of God and good of our ſelves and others, and that they may be helps to further us in the way of godlineſſe, and to eternal life and ſalvation, and then doubtleſſe we ſhall find them to be to our good and to our comfort.

The next thing that comes to be conſidered, is this, the Apoſtle ſaith, *The Commandment was ordained to life ;* the proper and natural end and uſe of the Law of God was life, that is, the Law was given of God, and ordained for the good of ſuch as ſhould perfectly obey it, even for the tranquility of their minds and conſciences, for the well being of their ſoules in this life, and for their eternal happineſſe and ſalvation in the Life to come. Hence this point might be ſtood on ; I will but only point at it.

Uſe 2.

We are not to reſt in the having and enjoying of good things.

Note.

That



*Doct. 2.*  
Perfect fulfilling of the Law of God brings life and salvation.

That the perfect fulfilling of the Law of God brings life and salvation, and the way to life and salvation is the perfect fulfilling of the Law of God. Howsoever no man, since the fall of *Adam*, being but a meer man, is able perfectly to fulfill the Law of God, in his own person, and so cannot be justified by the Law in the sight of God, and by the Law fulfilled by himself can come to life and salvation, *Gal. 3. 21.* *If there had been a Law given which could have given life, verily righteousness, that is, justification, should have been by the Law;* Yet this is a truth, that the perfect fulfilling of the Law, brings life and salvation, and the way to life and salvation, is the perfect fulfilling of the Law of God: yea, this is so true, that Christ himself brings none to life and salvation, but by his perfect obedience, and by his perfect fulfilling of the Law of God for them; true believers come to life and salvation by the perfect fulfilling of the Law of God, not in their own persons, but in Christ their Head and Saviour; and he having perfectly fulfilled the Law of God for them, is made righteousness to them, *1 Cor. 1. 30.* *He is made to such as truly believe in him, Wisdom, Righteousness, and Sanctification and Redemption.*

How the Law and the Gospel agree, and how they differ.

For indeed both the Law and the Gospel, in the general matter of them, require justice and righteousness to salvation, therein they consent and agree. But here is the difference; the law requires righteousness inherent and personal, and the Gospel, that requires righteousness imputed, righteousness inherent in Christ, and made ours by apprehension and application of faith: and so it is a truth, that the way to life and salvation, is the perfect fulfilling of the Law of God, and Christ justifies true believers, not onely by his death and suffering, freeing them from the guilt and punishment of their sins, but also by his perfect fulfilling of the Law of God for them, by his active obedience. Let it suffice to have touched that in a word.

The point I will stand on a little further offered to us from hence, that the Law was given of God, and ordained for the good of such as should perfectly fulfill it, namely, for the tranquillity of their minds in this life, and for their eternal happiness and salvation in the life to come, is this:

*Doctrine 3.*  
There is much comfort in yeelding sound and sincere obedience to Gods Commandments.

That there is much comfort in doing the Will of God, and in yeelding sound and sincere obedience to the Commandments of God, howsoever true believers cannot in time of this life perfectly fulfill the Law of God, according to the exact rule and justice of it in their own persons, yet doubtlesse they fulfil it in Christ, Christ having fulfilled for them; and their sound and sincere obedience to the Lawes and Commandments of God, yeelds to them a proportionable comfort, even sound and true peace, and tranquillity of mind and conscience in this life, and assurance of eternal comfort, happiness and salvation in the life to come; the Law of God is given and ordained for the good of such as perfectly fulfill it; both in this life, and in the life to come.

Now true believers perfectly fulfill the Law of God in Christ, as they are one with him by faith, and in their own persons they yeeld sound and sincere, though not perfect obedience to the Will of God revealed in his Word, and that which is lacking and defective in their obedience, is supplied by the perfect righteousness of Christ: and so, without question, yet yeelds to them much comfort, peace, and tranquillity of mind and conscience in this life, and certain assurance of eternal happiness and salvation in the Life to come, and the Lord hath promised so to reward it; and for this we have further plain evidence and testimony of Scripture.

*Psal. 19. 11.* *David saith, that in keeping the judgements, that is, the Lawes and Commandments of God, There is great reward.* *Heb. 6. 9.* saith the Author of that Epistle, *We are perswaded of you such things as accompany salvation.* Then Vers. 10, 11. he subjoynes, *For God is not unrighteous, that he should forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards his Name, in that ye have ministered to the Saints, and do minister your doing of good duties. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope*  
unto



unto the end. 2 Cor. 1. 12. saith the Apostle, *This is our rejoicing, the testimony of a good conscience, that in simplicity and godly pureness, and not in fleshly wisdom, As if he had said, This yeelds unto us much comfort and matter of great rejoicing, that our hearts witness with us, that we have behaved our selves in simplicity and godly pureness, and in all holy obedience to the Will of God, in doing our duty : and to this purpose is that, Deut. 30. 15, 16. Behold, saith Moses, I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil : In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his wayes, and to keep his Commandements and his Ordinances, and his Lawes, that thou maist live and be multiplied, and that the Lord thy God may blesse thee in the Land, whither thou goest to possesse it.* These and many other testimonies of Scripture do make this a cleer truth, That the sound and sincere obedience of true Believers to the Will of God revealed in his Word, to the Lawes, and Commandements of God, yeelds them much comfort, much peace and tranquillity of mind and conscience in this life, and certain assurance of eternal happiness and salvation in the life to come : and the reasons of it be these :

First, their sound and sincere obedience to the Commandements of God, is a fruit of their true justifying Faith, and the end of that Faith is eternal life and salvation. 1 Pet. 1. 9. *Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your soules.*

Reasons. 1.

And secondly, God hath bound himself by his promise, of his mercy, to reward the holy obedience of his children, and not to let the least good duty done by them, to go unrewarded. Matth. 10. 42. *The giving of a cup of cold water shall not lose his reward.* And therefore it is as possible that God should lye, or deny Himself, which is altogether impossible, as that true Believers, yeelding sound and sincere obedience to the Commandements of God, should fail to find much comfort, peace and tranquillity of mind and conscience in this life, and certain assurance of eternal life and salvation in the life to come.

2.

This truth serves first to answer an old rotten cavil of the wicked and prophane, against Gods children and servants, even that cavil that was rise and common in the dayes of the Prophet Malac. 3. 14. We there find that the wicked of his time said, *It is in vain to serve God : and, What profit is it that we have kept his Commandements, and that we have walked humbly before the Lord of hosts ?* And this is the very speech and language of many wicked persons in these our dayes. Many wicked persons, seeing Gods children careful to keep good conscience in all things, and that they hold on a strict course in holiness and in all good duties, and in yeelding obedience to the Commandements of God, and that they will not lye, nor swear, nor break the Sabbath, nor give themselves liberty (as they do) to follow after the pleasures and profits of the world ; commonly they open their mouthes wide against them, and thus they cavil against them with a kind of insulting over them ; Oh, say they, what good comes of your strict and precise course of life ? what are you the better for it ? are you better then we that are not so strict as you are ? Nay, do you not see that we thrive and prosper, and come forward in the world, and you thrive not, but are crossed in your dealings ? and are ye not hated and contemned of all ? do not you lose many a sweet morsel, and many a penny, and many a pound that you might have, if you would do as others do ? And I pray you then, what good get you by your strict course of life ?

Use. 1.

A cavil of the wicked against Gods children answered.

Thus commonly the wicked and prophane have their mouthes opened against Gods children, in respect of their care to do the Will of God, and to obey him in all his Commandements.

Now the Doctrine delivered affords to Gods Children an answer to this cavil : thus they may answer them and stop their mouthes, they may tell them, and that truly,

That they find much good by their holy course of life, and in yeelding sound and sincere obedience to the Commandements of God : for why ? it yeelds them



them much tranquillity of mind and conscience; it yeelds them much peace and comfort, yea, such peace of mind and conscience, as passeth all understanding, and it yeelds them certain assurance of eternal life, happinesse, and salvation of their souls and bodies in the Kingdome of heaven. And is that no matter of benefit? Can they then be said to get no good by their holy course of life? Oh! the good and profit of it is unspeakable far surpassing the good that comes of silver, gold, or all riches: and this may silence the wicked, and stop their mouthes, cavilling against Gods Children.

*Use 2.*  
Comfort to  
Gods children  
in their great-  
est distresse.

*Isai. 38. 3.*

Again, the doctrine delivered, serves as a notable ground of comfort to Gods Children in time of their greatest trouble and distresse: For what though they be troubled and vexed in the world, they are hated, contemned of all, they undergo many wrongs and much hard measure at the hands of the wicked, yet this may be a comfort to them, and cheer up their hearts, that howsoever they are troubled without, and there is nothing but war without, yet they have peace within, their sound and sincere obedience to the Commandements of God, yeelds them tranquillity of mind and conscience, and certain assurance that *their end shall be happinesse and peace*, as it is, *Psal. 37. 37.* We read *Isai. 38.* that when good King *Ezekiah* had received the sentence of death in himself, this was his comfort, *Vers. 3.* that *he had walked before the Lord in truth and in a perfect heart, and had done that which was good in his sight.*

And so Gods children, in time of their greatest trouble and distresse, yea, when the pangs of death are on them, may cheer up their hearts with the remembrance of this, that they have walked before the Lord in truth and in a perfect heart, and done that which was good in his sight; that will fill their hearts full of sweet comfort.

*The Law*, as the Apostle saith, *was ordained to life.* And they shall find, that their sound and sincere obedience to the Commandements of God, duly considered, will put life into them when they are half dead, it will revive their spirits and cheer up their hearts, giving them peace and comfort in this life, and assurance of salvation in the Life to come. Let Gods children think on this in their greatest troubles, let them be constant in well doing, and not be daunted; and *when their Lord comes and finds them so doing, they shall be blessed of him, and he shall make them Rulers over all his goods, Matth. 24. 46, 47.* Let all Gods children think on that to their comfort.

One thing yet remains to be noted in this Verse, namely this; The Apostle saith, *The Law which was ordained to him to life, proved to be to him to death;* and he found it so: he looking into the Law of God, it discovered to him his sin, and withal it wounded his heart and conscience on the sight of his sin, and he found that it did so.

*Doctrine 4.*

The Law must  
not only bring  
us to a sight of  
our sins, but  
also smite our  
hearts with  
sorrow for  
them.

Thus it must be with us, when we look into the Law of God, and examine our selves by that; we are not only thereby to come to a sight of our sins; but on the sight of them, we are to find our consciences and our hearts smitten thorow with sorrow for them, as they, *Act. 2. 37.* on the sight of their sins were pricked in their hearts, they were wounded in their souls. It is said, that *Dauids heart smote him when he had numbred the people, 2 Sam. 24. 10.* So must it be with us on the sight of our sins; we must find our hearts smitten and wounded, we must see our selves under the curse of the Law, lyable to all plagues and judgments in this life, and to everlasting perdition in the life to come, and so have our hearts thorowly humbled for our sins. Many fail and are defective in this; they content themselves with some general sight and sense of sin, and with some light and vanishing touch of conscience, causing them to send out a natural sigh or sob, but their hearts are never truly pressed and broken by the exceeding weight and burden of any one sin: we must find our hearts wounded, broken, and thorowly humbled on the sight of our sins: and unlesse on the sight of our sins we be brought to a feeling of our own deserved damnation, we are not capable of the grace of Christ to salvation.

VERS.



## VERS. II.

*For sinne took occasion by the Commandement, and deceived me, and thereby slue me.*

**I**N this Verse the Apostle gives the reason of that he said in the Verse foregoing, that the Commandment fell out to be to him to death, and he makes known, that the cause of that was his own corruption and sin, and he clears the Law in that respect, and he shews that the Commandment was not the proper cause of death to him, but only an occasion, and that occasion was thence taken, and none given, *Sinne took occasion by the Commandement, and thereby slue him*: and withal he shews how, and by what means sin taking occasion by the Commandement, did by the Commandement slay him, namely, by deceiving him. *Sinne, saith he, took occasion by the Commandement, and deceived me, and so by the Commandement slue me.*

Here then is laid before us, that the Law only occasionally slue the *Apostle*, and that the proper cause of it, that the Commandment fell out to be death to him, was his own corruption. And secondly, that his own corruption taking occasion by the Commandment, deceived him, and so by the Commandment slue him. In these two things stands the general matter of this Verse, *For sinne took occasion by the Commandement.*

These words we have, *Vers. 8.* where I shewed the meaning of them: therefore I will not now stand on every word particularly; we are thus to conceive them, as if the Apostle had said, For the corruption of my nature, being stirred up by the knowledg and due consideration of that Commandment of God, that forbids lust, and condemns it, though no occasion was given from that Commandment, yet the corruption of my heart took occasion on that Commandment to be stirring and working, and thereby deceived me.

Interpretation

These words (*Deceived me*) are diversly expounded. Some would have the word (*Deceived*) to be understood not of sin it self, but of the knowledge of sin, and the meaning to be this, that at length the *Apostle* perceived how far he had been deceived, and came to know how far he had been led out of the way by sin. But indeed that is a forced Exposition, and it offers violence to the Text and to the drift of the *Apostle*. The word (*Deceived*) rather points out the proper effect of sin, taking occasion by the Law, which is to deceive; and that we may rightly understand it, know, the word here rendred (*Deceived*) comes from a word that properly signifies to seduce, or to draw out of the way by enticement, by perswasion, or by insinuation; as a Thief sometimes perswades a Traveller to leave the ordinary way in which he is going, and to take some by-path, insinuating with him, and perswading him it is better, more easier, or more pleasant for him, and such like. And in this sense we find the word used, *Ephes. 5. 6.* where the *Apostle* saith, *Let no man deceive you with vain words.* As if he had said, Let no man seduce you, and draw you out of the way, to the committing of those sins before named, perswading with you that there is no such danger in them, as I tell you of: his words are but wind, they are vain words. Certainly these sins pull down the wrath of God on the children of disobedience. Let no man therefore perswade you to the contrary, and so deceive you. That is the proper signification of the word, and so the meaning of the *Apostle* in this place is this, as if he had said,

Sinne took occasion by the Commandment to be stirring and working in me & enticed me, and perswaded with me, not to obey the Commandment of God, but rather to yeeld to the lusts of mine own heart, & to fulfil them, as things far better and more pleasant; yea, it insinuated with me, that the more the things were forbidden and condemned, the more sweet and the more pleasant would be the doing of them, as it is *Pro. 9. 17.* *Stollen waters are sweet, and hid bread is pleasant.*  
And



And by this means it drew me out of the way of obedience to the Commandments of God, and to the committing of sin, and so deceived me, and thereby flue me. (*Thereby*) that is, by the same Commandment.

*Sin took occasion by the Commandment, and deceived me, and by the same Commandment flue me.* The meaning of that is this; the same Commandment, I being guilty of the breach of it, bound me over to the curse, and made me see my self liable to the wrath of God, and to eternal death and damnation; and so, by the same Commandment sin wounded my conscience, and gave a deadly blow to my soul, it flue me spiritually. Thus then conceive we the meaning of the *Apostle*, as if he had said,

For the corruption of my heart took occasion on that Commandment of God, that forbids lust, and condemns it; though no occasion was thence given, yet it took occasion thereby to be stirring in me, and it inticed me, and perswaded with me, not to obey the Commandment of God, but to yeeld to the lusts of mine own heart, and to fulfil them, as things far better and more pleasant, yea, rather to do things because they were forbidden and condemned, as more sweet and pleasant in the doing of them; and by that means it drew me out of the way of obedience to the Commandment of God, to the committing of sin, and so deceived me, and then by the same Commandment I being guilty of the breach of it, and thereby bound over to the curse, and made liable to eternal death, sin wounded my conscience, and gave my soul a deadly blow, it flue me spiritually.

First here note we, that the *Apostle* still goes on in cleering the Law of God from all fault and blame. Having said in the Verse before, that the Commandment was found to be unto him unto death; In this verse he cleers the Commandment, and layes the fault and blame where it ought to lye, namely, on the corruption of his own heart; that the corruption of his own heart took occasion to be stirring in him, and by the Commandment flue him. Hence then we may see, how we may cleer the Law and the Word of God, though it prove and fall out to be to some a favour of death and damnation.

*Doctrine 1.*  
The Word of God cleered, though to some it become a favour of death.

The fault is not in the Law of God and in the Word of God, but in the corruption of their own hearts. This point we handled Verse the eighth, and I will not now stand on it.

In the next place observe we, that the *Apostle* saith, *Sinne took occasion by the Commandment, and deceived him.* it inticed him, and perswaded with him not to obey the Commandment of God, but to yeeld to the lusts of his own heart, and to fulfil them as things far better and more pleasant, and so deceived him, and drew him to the practice of sin. Hence we are given to understand thus much:

*Doctrine 2.*  
Inbred corruption is of a subtil and deceiving nature.

That the corruption of the heart is of a subtil and deceiving nature, that sin and corruption that is in the hearts of men, deceives them, and by deceit drawes them to the practice of sin, it sets on sin many fair glosses and goodly colours, and so inticeth men, and perswades them to the practice of it, and by many colourable pretences it drawes men out of the way of obedience to the Commandments of God, to the committing of sin: inbred corruption playes the cunning Sophister with men, and deceives them. And hence it is, that the holy Ghost exhorts, *Heb. 3. 13. Take heed lest any of you be deceived through the deceitfulness of sin.* And *Ephes. 4. 22.* the *Apostle* calls the lusts that arise from the corruption of nature, *deceivable lusts, or lusts of deceit.*

*2 Chron. 29. 11.* we read, that *Hezekiah* gives this advertisement to the Levites, *Now my sons, (saith he) be not deceived.* As if he had said, Let not your own hearts deceive you, and draw you from the performance of your office and duty; look to your Office, and perform it. And to this purpose many other testimonies might be brought, setting forth the subtilty and the deceiving nature of the heart of man: but that we may better conceive the point, and that it may be more profitable to us, I hold it needful to instance in some particular wayes,



wayes, by which inbred corruption playes the Sophister with men, and deceives them, and drawes them to the practice of sin; for haply some may say, We easily yeeld, that the corruption of nature is of a subtil and deceiving nature; but how doth it deceive men, we would willingly know; for the satisfying of such as may thus desire it, I will stand to shew how the corruption of the heart deceives men, and know, that the wayes by which the corruption of the heart deceives men, and drawes them on to the practice of sin, are especially these:

How many  
wayes it de-  
ceives men.

First, it deceives men, by blinding their judgment. In respect of themselves it makes them look outward, and not inward, that is, it makes men see, and take notice of the sins of others, and not of their own sins; it makes men see that to be a sin in others, which they see not to be a sin in themselves, yea, to see little faults, even failings in others, and not greater and grosse sins in themselves; according to that, *Matth. 7. 3, 4. Why seeest thou a Mote that is in thy brothers eye, and perceivest not the Beam that is in thine own eye? Or how sayest thou to thy brother, Suffer me to cast out the mote out of thine eye, and behold, a beam in thine own eye?*

Secondly, the corruption of the heart deceives men, and drawes them on to the practice of sin, by setting before them the pleasantness of it, and by perswading them, that the more unlawful a thing is, the more sweet and pleasant it is: for example, a man that is greedy of gain, his corrupt heart tells him, if he can fetch in commodity by a crafty head, by a lying tongue, by a deceitfull hand, or by violent means, it is far sweeter, and much more worth then that which comes in by lawful means, as *Solomon saith, Prov. 20. 17. The bread of deceit is sweet to a man, but after ward his mouth shall be filled with gravel.*

Thirdly, the corruption of the heart deceives men, and drawes them to the practice of sin, by perswading them, that some things forbidden in the Law of God, are good and profitable; as some kind of lyes, a little breaking of the Sabbath, and selling some little commodities on the Sabbath, and doing a little in the Morning or Evening on that day, Usury, and such like. Thus was *Saul* deceived, *1 Sam. 15.*

Fourthly, the corruption of the heart deceives men, and drawes them on to the practice of sin, by turning away their minds from thinking earnestly on the punishment due to sin; it makes men put far away the evil day, and approach to the seat of iniquity, *Amos 6. 3.* It makes them think that the sin is not so great, and either it shall have no punishment, or but a small punishment; as the Devil perswaded *Eve*, that she should not dye at all, *Gen. 3. 4.* But it makes them think that they shall keep sin secret, or repent of it, and prevent the punishment, and so, in hope either of secrecie, or of impunity, it makes them bold to commit the sin. And these wayes especially, besides many other, doth the corruption of the heart deceive men, and draw them on to the practice of sin. And so we see the truth of this Position; That the corruption of the heart is of a subtil and deceiving nature, and no marvel: the reason of it is this:

It is the brood and off-spring of the Devil, and he is full of all subtilty, a liar and deceiver from the beginning, the father of lyes and of all deceit; and therefore it must needs be, that sin is of a deceiving nature.

Reason.

Now then this serves first, to discover to us whence it is, that ignorant persons are so easily drawn on to the practice of any sin, be it never so grosse; surely, hence it is, The Devil is a strong and subtil enemy, and they have also in their own bosomes another enemy both strong and subtil, the corruption of their own hearts, that joyneth hands with the Devil, and they have nothing in them to oppose to the force and subtilty of those enemies, they have neither knowledge nor grace to withstand them; for so long as they be ignorant, they are gracelesse. "An ignorant man or woman is a gracelesse man or woman; and therefore no marvel though they be easily drawn to the practice of any sin, be it never so grosse: and so they are in a miserable case and condition. Yea, the doctrine now delivered, discovers whence it is that many that are renowned for

Use 1.  
Whence it is  
that ignorant  
persons are  
easily drawn to  
sin.

Note.



wisdom in the world, and are indeed very wise, I mean, for worldly wisdom, they are able to foresee harms and dangers, and to prevent them; whence (I say) it is, that such persons are easily foyled by the lusts of their own hearts, and easily drawn on the practice of some foul sins; they are found to be Usurers, Extortioners, Tavern-hunters, Whore-hunters: and why? Surely, hence it is, though they be worldly wise, yet having no dram of true heavenly wisdom, the subtil corruption of their own hearts easily circumvents them, and goes beyond them, and draweth them upon the practice of sin, notwithstanding their worldly wisdom.

*Use 2.*  
We are to arm  
our selves  
against the  
subtilty of in-  
bred corrupti-  
on.

Again, is it so, that the corruption of the heart is of a subtil and deceiving nature? Then we must take notice of the subtilty of it, and learn to arme our selves against the subtilty and cunning working of it. And in this respect many in the world are justly to be blamed, they are ignorant of the nature of sin, they know not the subtilty of it, and they are secure. Well, our duty is to take notice of the subtilty of our own corrupt hearts, and we are to spie out the cunning working and sleights of them, and to arm our selves against them.

Labour thou to spie out the sleights and subtilties of thine own deceiving heart, how thine own heart is ready to joyn hands with the Devil, to deceive thee, and to draw thee to the practice of sin, by blinding thy judgment, by the pleasure of sin, by the profits of the world, by turning away thy mind from thinking of the punishment of sin seriously, and many other wayes, and arme thy self against these subtilties and sleights, and endeavour to prevent them.

*Quest.*  
*Ans.*

Haply thou wilt ask me, How?

I answer, By these means:

1. First, get thy judgment cleered in respect of thy self; never rest, till thou be able to judge aright of sin in thy self, by the Word of God.
2. Secondly, often meditate and think of the fearful consequents and fruits of sin; as the horror of a guilty conscience, anguish, fear, dread, trembling, amazement, a fearful expectation of Gods wrath and vengeance, a standing subject to all the plagues and judgments of God in this world, and everlasting perdition in the life to come.
3. Thirdly, remember that Gods eye looks on thee, and thou art ever in his presence; and he sees thee, wheresoever thou art; yea, he sees the very secrets of thine heart.
4. Fourthly, carry in thee a godly jealousy and suspicion of thy self, lest thine own deceitful heart should draw thee on sin before thou be aware. For *blessed is the man that feareth alway; but he that hardeneth his heart, shall fall into evil, Prov. 28. 14.* And adde to these, frequent, earnest, and hearty prayer, often and earnestly call on the Lord, that he would give thee wisdom and strength, against the strength and subtilty of thine own deceiving heart.
5. And if thou carefully use these means, thou shalt find thy self in some good measure armed against the subtilties and sleights of thine own deceiving heart, and be able to prevent them: and therefore be careful in the use of these means, and know, whosoever thou art, *It is a work of thy whole life*, thus to spie out the subtilties of thine own deceiving heart, and to arm thy self against them; and if thou slack this duty, sin will deceive thee. Remember the example of *David* and *Solomon*, they were men of great wisdom and grace, and yet slacking this duty, they were surpris'd by their own deceiving hearts, and brought to the practice of sin.

*Note.*

Be careful therefore in spying out the sleights of thine own deceiving heart, and in arming thy self against them, and remember but this one thing, If thou suffer thy self to be deceived by thine own subtil corruption, thou art in danger to be hardened, and then followes a fearful condition.

We are further to mark, that the *Apostle* saith (*Sin*) that is, his own corruption took occasion by the Commandement, to be stirring and working, and it deceived him, and it flue him on occasion of the Commandement of God, it inticed



inticed him to sin, and then it wounded his conscience, and gave a deadly blow to his soul, and made him lyable to the wrath of God, and eternal death and damnation. The Apostle joynes these two together, as following one on the other, *Sin deceived him, and Sin slue him*. Hence we are given to understand thus much :

That these two things ever follow one on the other, sin deceiving, and sin wounding the conscience, and making lyable to the wrath of God, and to eternal death and damnation ; the corruption of the heart deceives men, and by deceit drawes them upon the practice of sin, and thereupon followes the wound of conscience, and a subjection to the wrath of God, and eternal death and damnation : inbred corruption inticeth and perswades men to the practice of sin, and under the colour of pleasure, or profit, or the like, it drawes them on the practice of it, but afterwards it brings on them horreur of conscience, and without Gods mercy everlasting confusion, it makes them lyable to plagues and punishments in this world, and to eternal plagues and punishments in the world to come. And for this, we have plentiful evidence and testimony of Scripture : *Job 20. 12, 13, 14.* saith *Zophar*, *Wickednesse is for a time sweet in the mouth : a mans own heart deceiving him, it makes sin seem sweet and pleasant to him for a time, and he hides it under his tongue, he rowles it up and down in his mouth as some sweet morsel, he favours it, and will not forsake it, but keeps it close in his heart, he makes much of it : but afterwards it turns to gall and bitternesse in his bowels, and he finds it to be as deadly poyson to him, grinding and tormenting him inwardly in his soul and conscience.*

And thus speaks *Solomon* of him that is drawn to the sin of adultery, *Prov. 6. 32, 33.* that howsoever his own heart deceives him, and by the pleasure of that sin, drawes him to the practice of it, yet afterwards *it brings on him a wound, and dishonour, and destruction to his own soul.* *Prov. 20. 17.* saith *Solomon*, *The bread of deceit is sweet to a man, that is, that which is gotten by deceit, and by unlawful means, seems sweet to a man in the getting, but afterwards it turns to grit and gravel in his mouth.*

And to this purpose we have many examples in the Book of God, as that of *Achan*, *Joshuah 7.* he saith, *Vers. 21.* that his own covetous and deceiving heart set him on to lay his hands on a goodly booty, perswading him it would be much for his profit and advantage, even to take a goodly *Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold.* But afterward, by that means, besides the wound of a guilty conscience, it brought on him further trouble, even a violent and shameful death on him and all his, *Vers. 25.* And so it was with wicked *Ahab* ; his own wretched and deceiving heart inticed him to get away *Naboths Vineyard*, as a thing that lay very fit and commodious for him, yea, it drew him on to the murdering of *Naboth* and to the shedding of his blood most wickedly and most unjustly, that he might get possession of it, *1 King. 21. 19.* But afterward, that sin brought utter ruine and destruction both on him and his whole house. And many other examples might be brought to this purpose, clearing this point, that in-bred corruption, the corruption of the heart, under the colour of pleasure, profit, or the like, drawes men upon the practice of sin, and after that, it brings on them horreur of conscience, and it makes them liable to plagues and punishments in this world, and to eternal plagues in the world to come : and these two ever follow one on the other, sin deceiving, and sin wounding the conscience, and making lyable to the wrath of God, and to eternal death and destruction : And it must needs be so ;

For men being drawn upon the practice of sin, they are made guilty of the breach and transgression of Gods Law ; for, *Sin is the transgression of the Law.* *1 Iob. 3. 4.* And being guilty of the transgression of Gods Law, they are lyable to the curse of the Law ; and that is, all manner of plagues and judgments in this world, and everlasting plagues and judgments in the world to come.

This serves to discover the folly and madnesse of most men in the world. Are there

### Doctrine 3.

Sin deceiving, and sin wounding the conscience, ever follow one the other.

*Josh. 7. 21.*

Reason.

Use 1:



The folly of  
most in the  
world discove-  
red.

there not many in the world, that wittingly and wilfully rush and run into known sins? Do they not suffer themselves to be led by the lusts of their own hearts, and to be drawn upon the practice of sin, by their own deceiving corruption, setting sin before them, clothed in the habit of pleasure, or profit, or the like? For example; Do not many suffer themselves to be drawn on that sin of powring in Wine and strong drink, by the colour of the wine, and because *it goes down pleasantly*, as Solomon speaks? *Prov. 23. 31.* Doth not that make many sit guzzeling in the Ale-house or Tavern, when they should be in other places? Are not many drawn on to the practice of the sin of Uncleanesse, by the pleasure of that sin? And for the matter of Profit, alas, how doth that dazle the eyes of many, and make them for the gain of a penny, to lye, to swear, to coozen and deceive, yea, to break the Sabbath? Do not Victuallers, for the gain of a penny, sell their Victuals on the Lords holy Sabbath, and make no bones of breaking the holy Commandement of God? Poor soules! in so doing, what do they? Surely, rush on their own destruction; they bring on themselves guiltinesse of conscience, and they make themselves lyable to plagues and judgments in this world, and, without Gods great mercy, to eternal plagues and judgments in the world to come. And what folly and madnesse is it, for the enjoying of a little vanishing pleasure (for *the pleasure of sin is but for a season*, *Heb. 11. 25.*) and for the getting of some trifling profit, to run into such fearful danger? If a man gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, he makes but a miserable bargain. Therein then appears the folly and madnesse of most, that they suffer their own deceiving hearts to impose on them, and to draw them upon the practice of sin, for a little vanishing pleasure, or some trifling profit.

Use 2.

We must take  
heed, our own  
beguiling  
hearts deceive  
us not.

Again, is it so, that the corruption of the heart, under colour of pleasure, profit, or the like, drawes men on the practice of sin, and after that, brings on them horror of conscience, and makes them liable to plagues and judgments in this life? Then we must take heed we be not coozened by our own subtil and beguiling hearts, and that we suffer not them, under the colour of pleasure, profit, or the like, to draw us upon the practice of any known sin.

Dost thou know the thing to be evil, and to be a sin? Then take heed: let not thine own deceiving heart draw thee on the practice of it, by any colour whatsoever: remember what will follow after, even horror of conscience, and a standing subject to all plagues in this world, and to eternal plagues in the world to come. "*Yea, make account of Gods threatnings, of plagues and judgments denounced against sin, to be as certain as present executions, as if thou shouldst presently feel them.*"

Note.

As if thou suffer thy self to be drawn on that beastly sin of Drunkenesse, make account of the woes and plagues threatned against that sin, as that *it shall bite like a Serpent, and hurt like a Cockatrice*, *Prov. 23. 32.* as presently to seize on thee. So, if thou suffer thy self to break the Sabbath, for the gaining of a penny, or for any vile pleasure, make account of that, that is threatned *Jer. 17. 27.* as presently to be made good upon thee, that *a fire indeed shall be kindled in thy gates, and shall not be quenched*, even a fire unquenchable, that shall devour all thy substance.

And so in other particulars, make reckoning of the Judgments of God, threatned against any sin whatsoever thou art guilty of, as presently to light on thee, thou wittingly and willingly committing that sin. For indeed, if thou wittingly and willingly run into any known sin, thou hast no assurance to be freed from the plagues and judgments threatned against that sin one minute of an hour: thou canst not say, and make it good, when thou art quaffing and singing in the Alehouse, that thou shalt make an end of thy drunken merriment, before Gods punishing hand light on thee. No, no, thou hast no warrant for it, it is the Lords patience, if he throw not down judgment on thee presently. Therefore learn we to take heed of our own deceiving corruption; let it not, under



under the colour of pleasure, or profit, or the like, draw us upon the practice of any known sin: if it do, it brings on us guiltiness of conscience, and makes us liable to plagues and judgments in this world, and, without Gods mercy, to eternal plagues and judgment in the world to come; and we cannot promise to our selves freedom from the punishing hand of God, and from his judgments threatened against our sin, one minute of an hour.

Now in the last place observe we, that the *Apostle* saith, that *sin took occasion by the Commandement, and deceived him, and by the Commandement slew him*. *Sin*, saith he, *took occasion by the Commandement and deceived me, and thereby slew me*; that is, as we shewed, by the same Commandment, I being guilty of the transgression of it, and bound over to the curse of the Law, and made liable to the wrath of God, sin wounded my conscience, and gave a deadly blow to my soul, and slew me spiritually. The point hence is this;

That the Law of God wounds the conscience of such as are guilty of the breach of it, when they come to a sight of their sins, it strikes a terror into them, and fills them full of fear and amazement, and a fearful expectation of the wrath and vengeance of God; it binds them over to the curse of the Law, and it condemns them, and they are already condemned persons, and dead by the Law, that are guilty of the breach of it, being not freed from the curse and condemnation of it by Christ. And therefore the *Apostle* saith *Rom. 4. 15.* that *the Law causeth wrath*. His meaning is, that the Law being violated and broken, causeth wrath and vengeance to come on the breakers of it. The Law properly, and by it self, doth not cause wrath; but accidentally being violated and broken, it binds over to the curse of the Law, and so brings wrath and vengeance on the breakers of it; for indeed the curse of the Law is due to every one that breaks the Law in the least degree, being not freed from it by Christ. *Deut. 27. 26.* *Cursed is he that continueth not in all the words of this Law, to do them.* And therefore the Law of God wounds the conscience of such as are guilty of the breach of it, when they come to a sight of their sins; it striketh a terror into them, it binds them over to the curse of the Law, it condemns them being not freed from it by Christ.

#### Doctrine 4.

Gods Law wounds the conscience of such as are guilty of the breach of it, when they come to see their sins.

And this discovers the case and condition of such as are brought to a sight of their sins, and are yet in their natural condition, and out of Christ: the Law of God wounds their conscience, it terrifies them, and condemns them: but yet in this case there is difference between Gods Elect and the reprobate: for the reprobate, on the sight of their sins, are wounded by the Law to utter despair, and their wound and torment of conscience is but a beginning of hellish torment that shall last for ever, but Gods Elect being yet in their natural condition, and coming to a sight of their sins, the Law wounds their conscience, and terrifies them, and condemns them, yet withal, the Lord working graciously in them by his Spirit; *The Law drives them to Christ, Gal. 3. 24.*

#### Use.

The condition of such as are brought to a sight of their sins, being yet in their natural condition discovered.

As the sense and smart of a wound sends a man to the Chyrurgian: so the sense and feeling of sin, sends Gods Elect to Christ the heavenly Physician, and Gods Elect being vexed and disquieted on the sight of their sin, by the terrors and threatnings of the Law, are in better case then they, that never knew what the trouble of mind meant; for that trouble drives them to seek to Christ.

And thus it must be with us on the sight of our sins: we must find our selves thereby driven to Christ; and then happy we, that we have been troubled, for coming to Christ, weary, and laden, and groaning under the weight and burden of our sins; we shall find from him, ease, comfort, and refreshing, and eternal rest to our soules.



## VERS. 12.

*Wherefore the Law is holy, and the Commandment is holy, juſt and good.*



Ur Apoſtle having, in the Verſe foregoing, cleared the Law of God from being the cauſe of ſin, in this Verſe he concludes that point, and further ſtrengthens his concluſion touching the Law, not to be the cauſe of ſin, by an Argument taken from the nature and property of the Law of God; and he ſhews, that the Law of God in it ſelf, in its own nature, is holy, juſt, and good, and therefore cannot be the cauſe of ſin; that is his argument. Here then we

have three things affirmed of the Law of God; that it is holy, that it is juſt, and that it is good. And theſe three things are affirmed both of the whole Law in general, and of that Commandment of God ſpoken of before in particular. *Wherefore (ſaith the Apoſtle) the Law is holy, and the Commandment is holy, juſt and good.*

Interpretation

*Wherefore the Law is holy, and the Commandment is holy.* Some make this difference and this diſtinction between theſe two words, *Law* and *Commandment*, in this place, that *the Law* ſignifieth any Law of God whatſoever, and that *the Commandment* ſignifieth only the affirmative Precepts. But that is but a nice diſtinction. Some again underſtand theſe two words, *Law* and *Commandment*, as if the Apoſtle had ſaid, The Law, and whatſoever there is therein commanded. But indeed, that Interpretation doth not ſo fitly ſuit and agree to that which the Apoſtle ſaid before, *Verſ. 7.* He ſpeaks not only of the Law of God in general, but he alſo gives inſtance of one particular Commandment, namely, of the tenth Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not covet, or luſt, &c.*

And therefore the word (*Law*) in this Verſe, is to be taken as afore, for the whole moral Law of God, and the word (*Commandment*) is likewise taken for that particular Commandment before ſpoken of, namely, that *Commandment* that forbids Luſt, *is holy*, that is, is pure and undefiled, and free from all ſtain of falſhood, error, lyes, and ſins, as David ſaith, *Pſal. 12. 6. The words of the Lord are pure words, and they are like to ſilver tryed in a furnace of earth, ſined ſeven-fold.* And *1. Jam. 1. 27.* the Apoſtle joyns theſe two together, *pure and undefiled (and juſt)* namely, righteous, having in it no wrong nor iniquity at all, teaching and requiring ſuch things as are juſt, and cannot be taxed or reproved as unjuſt, or unequal in any reſpect. *Pſal. 19. 8. The Statutes of the Lord are right.* And *Verſ. 9. the judgments of the Lord are truth, and righteous altogether, (and good)* that is, requiring and commanding only ſuch things as are good, and forbidding the contrary all manner of evil, and ſhewing the good way in which men are to walk to life everlaſting. And therefore Moſes puts theſe two together, *Dent. 30. 15, 16. Behold, I have ſet before thee this day life and good, in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God.* Thus then are we to conceive the Apoſtles meaning in the words of this Verſe, as if he had ſaid,

*Wherefore the whole moral Law of God, yea, even that Commandment of God, that forbids Luſt, is pure and undefiled, free from all pollution of falſhood, error, lyes and ſins, and is alſo righteous, having in it no wrong, nor iniquity at all, teaching and requiring onely ſuch things as are juſt, and cannot be taxed as unjuſt, or unequal in any reſpect: and it is likewiſe good, it requires and commands onely good things, and forbids all manner of evil, and ſhewes the good way, in which men are to walk to life everlaſting.*

Here firſt conſider we the whole Verſe in general. We ſee, the Apoſtle not only clears the Law of God, and frees it from ſome foul blots, that ſome might, or haply did blemiſh it withal: but here alſo he ſets before us the excellency of the Law, and gives to it excellent and worthy Titles, that *it is holy, juſt, and good.* Now then the point hence is this,

That



That the Law of God, and indeed the whole Word of God (for it is true of the whole Word) is a moſt excellent Truth, it is ſuch a Truth, as is holy, juſt and good, it is a Truth that is pure, free from all ſtain of error, falſhood, lyes, and ſins, having no wrong nor iniquity at all in it, and it requires onely good things, and forbids all manner of evil; and ſo it is a moſt excellent and heavenly Truth: and to this purpoſe the holy Ghoſt ſpeaks plainly, and witneſſeth this Truth to us in many places of the Scripture. *Prov. 8. 6, 7, 8. ſaith Wiſdom, Give ear, I will ſpeak of excellent things, and the opening of my lips ſhall teach things that be right. 7. For my mouth ſhall ſpeak the truth, and my lips abhor wickedneſſe. 8. All the words of my mouth are righteous, there is no lewdneſſe nor frowardneſſe in them. And Pſal. 19. 7, 8, 9. ſaith David, The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the ſent, the Teſtimony of the Lord is ſure, and giveth wiſdom unto the ſimple. The Statutes of the Lord are right, and rejoyce the heart, the Commandment of the Lord is pure, and giveth light unto the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, and endureth for ever: the Judgements of the Lord are Truth, and righteous altogether. And Pſal. 119. in many places of it, David gives theſe excellent Titles to the Law of God, and to the Commandments, that they are pure, and juſt, and righteous, and true, and good, and the like. Rom. 12. 2. ſaith the Apoſtle, Be changed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good Will of God (meaning his will revealed in his written Word) acceptable and perfect. And to this purpoſe we might bring many other teſtimonies, giving evidence to this Truth; That the Law and Word of God is a moſt excellent and heavenly Truth, pure and free from all ſtain of error, falſhood, lyes, and ſins, and juſt, and righteous, having no wrong, nor iniquity at all in it, and commanding onely good things, and forbidding all manner of evil. And the reaſons of this truth are,*

First, the Law and Word of God are breathed out from the Lord himſelf, it comes from him as his expreſs Image, it bears the ſtamp and image of God himſelf, who is moſt holy, juſt, and good, yea, holineſſe, juſtice, and goodneſſe it ſelf, and it hath been publiſhed by the miniſtery of holy men of God, as they were moved by the holy Ghoſt, 2 Pet. 1. 21.

Secondly, the Law and Word of God expreſſeth the holy and unchangeable will of God, according to which he would have us to frame our hearts and lives, it is the perfect rule of holineſſe, righteouſneſſe, and goodneſſe, and therefore it muſt needs be in it ſelf holy, and juſt, and good, and ſo a moſt excellent and heavenly Truth. Now then to make uſe of this,

First, this ſerves to point out the preferment of the Law and Word of God, above all Lawes and Writings of men whatſoever; this makes known to us the priviledg and preferment that the Law and Word of God hath above all other Lawes and Writings whatſoever; for in other Lawes and Writings there is found ſome error or ſin, but the Law and Word of God is a moſt excellent and heavenly Truth, breathed out from the Lord himſelf, bearing his Image, and ſo moſt pure, juſt, and good, free from all ſtain of error and ſin, yea, herein appears the priviledg of Gods Church and People, above all other people in the world, in that they have a Law and Word ſo excellent and heavenly, and ſo holy, and ſo juſt, given to them, as *Moses ſaid, Dent. 4. 8. What Nation is ſo great, that hath Ordinances and Lawes ſo righteous, as all this Law which I ſet before you this day?* and *Pſal. 147. 19, 20. ſaith the Pſalmiſt, The Lord ſhewes his Word unto JACOB, his Statutes and his Judgements unto ISRAEL; he hath not dealt ſo with every Nation, neither have they known his Judgements.* This is our priviledg and preferment in this Land, above many Nations in the world: The Lord hath vouchſafed to us his holy and juſt Law and Word, yea, his holy goſpel, which by a ſpecial kind of excellency is called, *The good Word of God; Heb. 6. 5.* And we are to carry our ſelves answerable to ſuch a priviledg and preferment.

For a ſecond uſe of this; Is it ſo, that the Law and Word of God is a moſt excellent

*Doctrine 1.*  
The whole  
Word of God  
is a moſt ex-  
cellent Truth;

*Reasons. 1.*

2.

*Uſe. 1.*  
The prefer-  
ment of the  
Law and Word  
of God, above  
all other lawes  
and writings.



*Use 2.*  
Our duty, in  
respect of the  
excellency of  
the Word of  
God vouchsa-  
fed unto us.

excellent and heavenly Truth, holy, and pure, and just, and good? Surely then, our duty is to acknowledge it is so to be, and to esteem it so to be. And the Lord vouchsafing to us his holy, just, and good Word, we are to carry our selves answerable to the holiness, and goodness of it. Shall the Lord be trust us with his excellent and heavenly Truth, his holy, just, and good Word, the rule of all holiness, justice, and goodness; and shall we carry our selves as those that want this excellent Truth? Shall we carry our selves as Turkes, and as Pagans that know not God, and have not his holy and good Word vouchsafed unto them? If we do, in the end it will turn to our shame and reproch, yea certainly, without Gods great mercy, to our everlasting shame and confusion, and to our deeper condemnation.

And yet thus it is with many of us; many amongst us will sometimes confesse and say, We have the holy Word of God amongst us, we hear many good things, and many holy and good Lessons are delivered unto us from the Word of God; but alas, where is our answering of them? where is almost the man or the woman, that suffer themselves to be changed into the mould and pattern of the good Word of God? Nay, do not many carry themselves, as if they had never heard one syllable of the good Word of God? are not many as vile and as wretched in the course of their lives, as if they had been bred and brought up among the wild Irish? Yea, I dare boldly speak it, though with grief, you shall not find such beastly Drunkenness, and such bitterness in Cursing, Swearing, Rayling, and the like, in a country-village or Town, where they scarce hear one Sermon in a year, as is to be found in some amongst us, we having the holy and good word of God in plentiful measure vouchsafed unto us: And will not the Lord one day visit for this? Yes assuredly, the Lord will one day require it at their hands that thus wretchedly carry themselves; making light account, yea, abusing his holy and good Word sent unto them; the Lord will not suffer a thing of such excellent worth, as his holy, just, and good Word is, so to be contemned and abused. No, no, *The Lord Jesus will one day shew himself from heaven in flaming fire, rendring vengeance.* To whom? surely, *To such as know not God, and to such as do not obey the unto Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Thes. 1. 8.* And it shall be easier at the day of judgement for very Pagans and Infidels, then for them that contemn and abuse the holy and good Word of God vouchsafed to them.

Oh then, learn we (the Lord vouchsafing his holy, just, and good Word to us) to acknowledge the excellency of it, and to esteem it according to the worth of it, and to carry our selves answerable to it; let it work on us, and transform and change us into the Image of it self, into holiness, righteousness, and goodness: and then doubtlesse we shall finde the comforts of it made good unto us; otherwise, every good and holy instruction we have heard out of the Word of God, shall one day be so many bills of Inditement against us to condemn us, and shall aggravate and increase our judgement and condemnation.

Note we in the next place, the *Apostle* saith not onely thus, *The Law is holy,* but he adds further, *and the Commandment is holy, just, and good,* even that Commandment of God that forbids Lust, is holy, just, and good.

*Doctrine 2.*  
Every one of  
Gods Com-  
mandments  
is to be este-  
med holy, just,  
and good.

Hence we are taught, that we must acknowledge all and every one of Gods Commandments to be holy, just, and good, as *David* did, *Psal. 119. 128.* saith he, *I esteem all thy Precepts most just, and have all false wayes:* and *Vers. 151.* *All thy Commandments are true.*

Thus must we do: for indeed the Law of God is throughout like it self in every part and parcel of it, it is holy, just, and good, and we are so to acknowledge it, and we are so to esteem of every Commandment of God; that is our duty: and to help us forward in this duty, know, that it is a sure sign of grace, when we can acknowledge every Commandment of God to be holy, just, and good, when we can justify the Wisdom of God in his Word,

*Matth.*



*Matth 11. 19. Wisdom is justified of her children; when a man can justify the Commandment of the Sabbath, the Commandment against Uncleanness, and whatsoever Commandment of God doth most crosse his own corruption, that is an argument of grace and of an holy heart; then our eyes are opened to see the excellency of the Word of God. Every wise worldling will be disputing and reasoning against each Commandment of God, that in some thing it is too hard and too strict; as that, On the Sabbath we are not to do our own wills, but to call the Sabbath a delight, and to consecrate it as glorious to the Lord, and to honour him, not seeking our own will, nor speaking a vain word, Isa. 58. 13. Oh that is too strict and too hard. That money is not to be given on Usury; that our apparel must be modest and sober, what will some carnal person say, May we not a little follow the fashion? We shall then be nothing esteemed of in the world; that is too strict and too hard. And so for Gaming, Carding, and dicing, may we not a little use them? well, know thou, whosoever thou art, it is a sign of a rotten and corrupt heart, thus to be reasoning against the Commandments of God: whosoever hath grace truly wrought in his heart, will justify every part and parcel of the word of God, and hold it to be most holy, just, and good.*

Come we now to speak of the Titles and Epithets here given to the Law of God severally; and first (as you see) it is said to be holy, *The Law is holy, and the Commandment is holy*: that is, pure and undefiled, free from all stain of error, falshood, lyes, and sins: and that is a special property of the Law of God; the Law and VVord of God is in it self, in its own nature, holy and pure, having no manner of pollution cleaving to it at all; and we find this Title and Epithet (*holy or pure*) expressly given to the written VVord of God in other places of it, as *Rom. 1. 2. Which he had promised afore by his Prophets in the holy Scriptures.* So likewise, *2 Tim. 3. 15. saith the Apostle to TIMOTHY; Thou hast known the holy Scriptures of a child.* and so, *Psal. 12. 6. saith DAVID, The words of God are pure words,* and *Psal. 19. 8. The Commandment of the Lord is pure.*

And to these, many other testimonies might be added, where this Epithet or Title (*holy or pure*) is given to the Law and word of God. But I hold it not so needful; I will rather shew, how and in what respect the Law and VVord of God is said to be holy, that so we may rightly conceive the holiness and purity of it.

And to this purpose know we, that the Law and VVord of God is holy and pure in three respects especially, namely, in respect of the Author of it, in respect of the matter of it, and in respect of the working of it.

As first, it is holy and pure, in respect the Author of it, because it comes from God, it is breathed out from the holy Spirit of God, he is the Author of it, who is holiness it self.

Secondly, it is holy, in respect of the matter of it, being the VVisdom and Truth of God reveiled, and it teaching a truth which is holy, even the truth, *Which is according to Godliness.* *Tit. 1. 1. PAUL a servant of God and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of Gods Elect, and the knowledge of the truth, which is according to Godliness.*

And it is holy, in respect of the effect and working of it; because, it sanctifies and makes other things holy, though not as a cause, as the blood of Christ and as the grace of Gods Spirit do; for these two things, as causes, do sanctifie and make men holy; howsoever (I say) the Law and the VVord of God do not so sanctifie and make holy as causes, yet as instruments and means they do sanctifie and make other things holy, as the Sacraments and Prayer do: the VVord of God sanctifies men instrumentally, in that it makes them resemble God in many graces as Christ prayed, *Joh. 17. 17. Sanctifie them with thy Truth, thy Word is Truth.* And again, the VVord of God, it sanctifies other inferiour creatures to the use of man, as also Prayer doth; the VVord of God, either by promise

The Law and Word of God is holy in three respects.

1.

2.

3.

How the word of God doth sanctifie.



promise or by commandement, ſanctifies the creatures to their Lawful ends and uſes, ſo that men having a promise or a commandement in the VVord of God, touching the Lawful uſe of the creatures, they may uſe them with a good conſcience. 1 Tim. 4. 5. *Every creature of God is good : and nothing ought to be re- fuſed, if it be received with thanks-giving. For it is ſanctified by the Word of God and prayer, 1 Tim. 4. 4. 5.*

Thus then we ſee, how and in what reſpects the Law and Word of God is *holy and pure*. It comes from the holy Spirit of God : it is the reveiled Wiſdome and Truth of God, teaching that Truth which is according to Godli- neſſe ; and as an instrument and means, it ſanctifies, and makes both men and other things holy : and ſo it is a moſt holy and pure truth.

This property of the VVord of God, the purity and holineſſe of it, is one in- fallible note and marke, by which we may know and be perſwaded that it is the very Word of God : this one note, if we had no other, carries with it, and contains in it, ſufficient evidence againſt all contradiction, that it is from God, and hath a ſacred authority in it ſelf, and depends not on the Church, or the Pope, as the Papiſts teach : the Scripture is holy and pure, as God himſelf ; and therefore certainly it is of God, and from God ; it is not the testimony and tradition of the Church, that is able to reſolve and ſettle the conſcience, which is Scripture, and which is not, as the Papiſts teach. No, no : the testimony of the Church is in feriour to the evidence of the Scripture : for the Scripture points out the Church, and contains in it the true notes of the Church : yea, the Scrip- ture, as an instrument and means, it ſanctifies the Church and members of it. And therefore, as Chriſt ſaid to the Pharifees, *Matth. 23. 17. Ye fools and blind: Whether is greater the gold, or the Temple that ſanctifieth the gold?* So it may be juſtly ſaid to the Papiſts, Ye fools and blind, whether is greater, and which is of more authority, the Church, or the Scripture which ſanctifies the Church ? Without queſtion the Scripture is of greater authority then the Church : and it is not the testimony and tradition of the Church, that can authorize the Scrip- ture in any mans conſcience ; but the purity and holineſſe of the Scripture it ſelf is a ſpecial note, intallibly aſſuring us that it is the very Word of God.

Again, is it ſo, that the Word of God is a moſt holy and pure Truth ? Sure- ly, then it muſt be thought on, and it muſt be ſpoken of with reverence and due reſpect ; the Miniſter muſt purely think on the Word of God, and purely de- liver it : and it muſt be far from us, to apply the holy and pure Word of God, or any part or parcel of it, to vain, light, or prophane and wicked uſes, as to Charms, to Inchantments, to Jeſts and Merriments, to turn the Scripture-phra- ſes to Jeſts, or to make Stage-playes of matters contained in the Book of God ; to apply the holy Word of God, or any part of it, to theſe vile uſes, is a grie- vous ſin, and a moſt horrible and fearful prophanation of the holy and pure Word of God, and a taking of Gods Name in vain ; and doubtleſſe, the Lord will not ſuffer them that are guilty of that ſin, to eſcape unpuniſhed. And it is a wicked and graceleſſe ſpeech, that is uttered by ſome, that they can profit as much by a Stage-play, ſitting forth ſome good matter out of the Scripture, as by the beſt Sermon in the world.

Alas, poor ſoul, whoſoever thou art ! Can the holy Word of God, fearfully abuſed and prophaned, profit thee, as much as when it is rightly divided, and applyed according to the Ordinance of God ? Is it poſſible ? No, no : it is not poſſible : and thou that art of that mind, thou art blinded by the Devil, and thou haſt a rotten and corrupt heart in thee, and continuing in that mind, and frequenting Stage-Playes, with a conceit that thou canſt profit as much by them as by the beſt Sermons, thou art in the gall of bitterneſſe, and the bond of ini- quity, and thou art partaker with thoſe graceleſſe Imps, I mean, Stage-players, the limbs of the Devil ; for ſo they are, as long as they go on in that courſe of life, in the prophanation of the holy Word of God ; and aſſure thy ſelf, the Lord will not hold thee guiltleſſe for that ſin ; The wrath and vengeance of God continually

*Uſe 1.*

One inſalli- ble note that Scripture is the Word of God.

*Uſe 2.*

Gods Word muſt be thought on and ſpoken of ſhich reve- rence.



continually hangs over thine head for that ſin: and therefore if thou tender the good of thine own ſoul, learn to reform thy ſelf.

In the third place, is it ſo, that the Word of God is a moſt holy & pure Truth? Certainly, then our duty is to come to the reading and to the hearing of it, with holy hearts, and with holy affections; when we either read the Word of God, or hear it preached unto us, we are to empty our hearts of all impure luſts and vile affections, and we muſt labour to receive the holy and pure Word of God into holy hearts and ſanctified ſoules. Now herein moſt men fail exceedingly, moſt men ruſh into the Houſe of God, and never care to ſearch into their own hearts, and to diſburden them of filthy luſts and vile affections. No, no; they come with their hearts full fraught with ſuch luſts and affections, full of Pride, full of Self-love, full of Covetouſneſſe, and cares of the World, full of Envy and Malice, yea, many times full of Malice and Bitterneſſe againſt the Preacher that delivers the holy Word of God to them; and can they then look to profit by the Word of God, and to find good by it? No, no: it is not poſſible. This is one ſpecial cauſe, that men and women profit not by the holy Word of God, and that they are not bettered by it; they lay impure hands on the pure Word of God, and bring impure hearts to the hearing of it, and ſo doing, they defile the Word and make it impure to themſelves. *Tit. 1. 15. To the impure, all things (even the holy things of God) are impure.* And how then can they poſſibly find profit or comfort from the holy Word of God? Yea, they not onely defile the holy Word of God, but they turn it to a curſe to themſelves. *Mal. 2. 2. I will curſe your bleſſings, yea, I have curſed them already.*

Uſe 3.  
We are to come to the reading and hearing of Gods Word with holy hearts.

Oh then learn we, if we would not defile the holy Word of God, and turn it to a curſe to our ſelves, learn we to come the reading and hearing of it with holy hearts, and holy affections. *Exod. 3. 5. Moſes was commanded to put off his ſhoes, becauſe the place whereon he ſtood was holy ground.* So muſt we do, when we come to the hearing of the Word of God: for then we come before the face and preſence of God after a ſpecial manner, and we muſt then put off our ſhoes, that is, we muſt put off impure luſts, and vile affections, that are as ſhoes on our hearts. It is the counſel of the Preacher, *Eccleſ. 4. 17. Take heed to thy feet, when thou entreſt into the Houſe of God.* When thou commeſt to Gods Houſe, Gods Altar, Gods Table, &c. take heed to thy feet, look to thy heart and affections, waſh, purge, and cleanſe thine heart and ſoul, caſt off all worldly cares, impure thoughts and vile affections, if thou wouldſt have the holy Word of God and his holy Ordinances profitable and truly comfortable to thee.

Come we now to ſpeak of the Epithet and Title of the Law. The Apoſtle here, in the ſecond place, gives to the Law of God, that *it is juſt, the Law is juſt, and Commandement is juſt*, that is, as we ſhewed, righteous, having no wrong nor iniquity in it at all: it is ſuch a truth as teacheth juſt things, and cannot be taxed as unjuſt or unequal in any thing. And this alſo is a ſpecial property of the Law of God, and of the Word of God, it is a juſt Word, it is juſt and righteous in every thing it requires, and whatſoever is commanded, or taught, or promiſed, or threatned in the Word of God, is juſt, and cannot be taxed as unjuſt, or unequal in any thing.

And thus much we find witneſſed of the Word of God in many places of Scripture. *Prov. 8. 8. All the words of my mouth are righteous, and there is no lewdneſſe nor forwardneſſe in them,* ſaith Wiſdome, even the Wiſdome of God. *Pſal. 19. 8. The Statutes of the Lord are right.* And Verſe 9. *The judgments of the Lord are righteous altogether.* *Pſal. 119. 106.* ſaith David, *I will keep thy righteous judgments.* And Verſe 123. *Mine eyes have failed, in waiting for thy ſalvation and for thy juſt promiſe.* And Verſe 128. *I eſteem all thy Precepts moſt juſt.* And Verſe 137, 138. *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and juſt are thy judgments. Thou haſt commanded juſtice by thy Testimonies.* And many like teſtimonies of Scripture we find, where this Title (*juſt, or righteous*) is attributed to the Law of God, and to the Word of God.

Pſal. 19. 8, 9.

But



But not to spend time in citing more testimonies to that purpose, I will, as before, in speaking of the holiness and purity of the Law and Word of God, briefly also shew how, and in what respects, the Law and Word of God is said to be just and righteous, which may serve as grounds and reasons of this *Epithet* given to the Law and Word of God.

The Law and Word of God is just in three respects.

1.

Know we then, that the Law and Word of God is said to be just and righteous in these three respects: In respect of the Author of it; In respect of the matter of it; And in respect of the end and use of it; as,

2.

First, it is just and righteous, in respect of the Author of it: because it proceeds from God, who is most just, yea perfect Justice it self, and infinite in holiness and justice; and with whom dwells no iniquity at all.

3

And Secondly, the Law and Word of God is just and righteous, in respect of the matter of it: because the matter of it is the revealed Justice of God, it reveals the perfect Justice of God and his Righteousness; it is the perfect Rule of all righteousness: it teacheth what is due to God, and what is due to man; and it gives to every one that which is due; it promiseth good to those that are good; and it threatens ill to those that are wicked; and that without respect of persons; it makes known the just and righteous will of God, without all flattery or partiality.

And thirdly, the Law and Word of God is just and righteous, in respect of the end and use of it: because it tends to this end, to make men just and righteous; and as the Apostle saith, *2 Tim. 3. 16 17. The whole Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable to teach, to improve, to correct, and to instruct in righteousness. That the man of God may be absolute, being made perfect unto all good works.* Yea the moral Law of God is able to justify such as perfectly keepe and fulfill it, and the word of God will certainly acquit, and justify those that believe it, and embrace it, and yeeld sound obedience to it, and that, before the Judgment seat of the Lord.

We see then, how, and in what respects the Law and Word of God is just and righteous; it proceeds from God, who is most just, yea infinite in holiness and justice; it reveals the perfect Justice of God, and his righteousness; it is the perfect Rule of righteousness, teaching what of right belongs to God, and what also is due to men, it gives to every one his due, promising good to those that are good, and threatening ill to those that are wicked, and that, without respect of persons, and without all flattery and partiality; and it tends to this end, to make men just and righteous, even to acquite and justify as many as truly embrace it, believe it, and yeeld sound obedience to it, and that, before the Judgment Seat of the Lord. And so we may certainly conclude and resolve on this, that the Law and Word of God is a most just and righteous Truth.

Use. I  
The Law of God requires perfect justice and righteousness in this.

This being a truth, it most needs follow on this, that the Law of God requires perfect justice, and perfect righteousness, and that in this life. The Law of God requires that men in this life, yeeld perfect obedience to it. It is a meere shift and device of our adversaries the Papists, to say that men are not bound in this life to yeeld such perfect obedience to the Law of God, as in the life to come (for so they distinguish between obedience to the Law of God in this life and in the life to come.)

They say there is a double obedience to the Law of God, and a double perfect fulfilling of the Law: one in time of this life, which is, when men love God above all things, and their Neighbour as themselves: and the other in the life to come; and that is, when men love God with all the heart and soul, with all the powers and faculties of the soul, and with all the strength of all those powers: that is their distinction. Indeed a very absurd and foolish distinction, and directly opposite and contrary to the plain evidence of Scripture: for when the Lord saith in the Law, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might*: to whom doth he speak? onely to men glorified in heaven? No certainly: he speaks to all men, to such as live yet in this



this world, and also to them that are glorified in heaven; his Law is eternal, and unchangeable, and contains an eternal and unchangeable truth and righteousness, yea one and the same truth and righteousness for ever: and there is one and the same rule of righteousness given to men glorified in heaven, and to men living here on the face of the earth: and it is very absurd to say, that a man is not bound in time of this life to love God with all his heart, and with all his soul, but only in the life to come: "*For what man was bound to, and could do in the state of innocency, the same, and so much the Law of God requires at his hands in the state of corruption.*" Now, in the state of Innocency, Adam was bound to love God with all his heart and soul, and could so love God; and therefore the same absolute and entire obedience is now required at the hands of men, though they are never able to yeeld it; and therefore that distinction invented by the Papists, is absurd, That there is a double fulfilling of the Law of God; one in the time of this life, and another in the life to come. And it cannot stand with the truth now delivered, That the Law of God is most just and righteous, and so requires perfect justice and righteousness at the hands of men.

Note.

Again, Is it so, That the Law and Word of God is a most just and righteous Truth, a Truth that gives every one his due, promising good to those that are good, and threatening ill to those that are wicked, and that without respect of persons, and without all partiality? Surely, then it must in like manner be delivered, the Word of God is just, it is impartial, it respects no mans person; and it must so be delivered, it must justly and unpartially be dispenced, the Minister of the Word, in preaching and dispencing the Word of God to the people, must look that he deal justly, that he promise good to those that are good, and threaten ill to those that are wicked; he must not make sad the hearts of those whom God hath not made sad, nor soothe up any in their sins, nor strengthen the hands of the wicked, *Jer. 23. 14.* nor promise peace to those that walk after the stubbornness of their own hearts, *Vers. 17.* For fear or favour, because they are rich, or great in the world, he must not humour men and please men: if he do, he is not the servant of Christ. *Gal. 1. 10.* *If I should yet please men, I were not the servant of Christ.* This was the fault that was charged on the Priests, *Mal. 2. 9.* that they were partial in the Law; they lift up the faces of men; they made the wicked lift up their heads. And this was a foul fault, and this ought to be far from the Ministers of the Gospel; they are to dispence the just and righteous Word of God justly and unpartially: yea, as it is said of the Levites, *Deut. 33. 9.* In the execution of their Office in teaching the people, they must take no notice of Father or Mother, Brethren or their own Kindred, they must spare none, if they be wicked, be they never so dear or near unto them, but tell them their own, and give to every one his due; admonition, to whom admonition belongs; rebuke, to whom rebuke belongs; comfort, to whom comfort belongs, without fear or favour, without flattery or partiality.

Use 2.  
The Word of God must be dispenced justly and unpartially.

Jer. 23. 14, 17.

And if this be the duty of the Minister; surely, then there is a duty answerable to it, required of the people. Must the Minister dispence the Word of God justly, and without respect of persons? Doubtlesse, then the Word of God being in that manner dispenced, the people are to hear it willingly and patiently, the people are to hear the Word of just reproof with patience, and they must not fret and kick against it, as the manner of some is. Art thou justly reprov'd for thy sin, and are the Judgements of God justly denounced against thee? Hear the Word of God so applyed, with willingness and patience, and let it be far from thee to except against the Minister, or to quarrel with his affections, and to say, he speaks out of spleen, or malice, or the like. No, no; remember that he is called to that office, to dispence the Word of God: and if he make conscience of his duty, he dares not but dispence it justly and unpartially, not sparing thee, when thou art justly to be reprov'd, whosoever thou art.

How people are to hear the Word of God, being unpartially dispenced.

But thou wilt say, I have been kind to him, and many wayes testified my

L

love



love unto him. Hast thou so? and wouldst thou have thy kindnesse make him partial in the execution of his office and duty? Shall thy kindnesse make him unfaithful to him that hath put him in that office? and shall it make him *steal away the Word from thee*, *Jer. 23. 30.* and not give thee that portion of the Word that belongs to thee, and so betray thee into the hands of the Devil? Surely, that were to requite thy kindnesse, with the greatest unkindnesse and unthankfulness in the world; and thou hast no reason to expect it, and yet this is expected and desired of many: they think, if they be kind to their Minister, then the Minister is bound to speak peace to them, though they be wicked, and he must not meddle with their sins, but suffer them to go on quietly to their own destruction. And if the Minister be to preach a Funeral Sermon, it is presumed, that he must praise the party deceased, though there were nothing in him praise-worthy: and if he do not so, then mens mouthes are opened wide against him, and they censure him at their pleasure. A Minister in dispensing the Word of God, must speak as God would speak. And would God commend a man or a woman, in whom nothing was found worthy commendation? No certainly: neither dares the Minister of God do it, that makes conscience of his duty, as *Elihu* said, *Job 32. 21, 22.* *He dare not give titles to men, lest his Maker should take him away suddenly.* The Minister of God must dispence the just Word of God justly, giving to every one his due portion: admonition, to whom admonition; rebuke, to whom rebuke; and comfort, to whom comfort belongs. And if the Minister do so, thou art to hear it with meeknesse, and patience, and subjection to it. And know this for a truth; If thou think that which is justly and truly delivered out of the Word of God, too hard and too strict, and that there is too much required at thy hands, and thou spurnest against it, when thou art called on to the practice of any duty, or justly reprov'd for thy sin by the ministry of the Word; thou layest injustice on the just and righteous Law and Word of God; and so doing, thou chargest God with injustice: and that is a fearful height of sin, and the Lord will not suffer it to escape unpunished.

*Use 3.*  
Whither we  
must go, to  
know what is  
just and what  
is equal,

In the third place; Is it so, that the Law and Word of God is a most just and righteous Truth, even the perfect Rule of righteousness? If then we would know what is just, and what is equal, what in equity and good conscience we are bound to do, both towards God and towards men; we must go to the rule of justice and equity, *To the Law, and to the Testimony*, as *Isai. 8. 20.* That is able to resolve us, what honour, worship, fear, reverence, obedience, love, confidence, and such like, that we owe to God, and how we may carry our selves justly towards men; what honour, reverence, and respect, and what reward or punishment belongs to men, and how we are to deal with them in matters of contract, in buying and selling with them.

Men commonly deceive themselves in the matter of justice; they think they deal unjustly and truly with men, if they pay every one his own, and owe nothing to any, when notwithstanding they are Usurers, and they stick not to defraud men, and to over-reach them in bargaining with them, and make no conscience of using false weights and measures. The Word of God will tell them another thing. And therefore if we would be resolved, what is just and equal both in duties towards God and towards men, and what we may justly do, and with good conscience, in every particular action, we must have recourse to the Law and Word of God.

Come we now to the third and last Epithet and Title here given to the Law of God, that it is good: saith the *Apostle*, *The Law is good, and the Commandments*; that is, as we shewed, It commands only such things as are good, and forbids all manner of evil, and it shews men the good way in which they are to walk. And this likewise is a special property of the Law and of the Word of God; the Word of God is such a Truth, as teacheth good things, yea, whatsoever is taught, or promised, or threatened in the Word of God, is good, and whatsoever the Word of God forbids and condemns, is certainly evil, and cannot



not be juſtified : and the Word of God ſhews men what is good, even the good Way, in which they are to walk to life and ſalvation. And for this alſo we have evidence and teſtimony of Scripture. *Rom. 12. 2.* ſaith the *Apoſtle*, *Be ye changed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good Will of God, acceptable and perfect.* He means the will of God revealed in his word, and he calls that *The good will of God*, *1 Tim. 1. 8.* The *Apoſtle* takes it for a known and confeſſed truth : ſaith he, *We know, that the Law is good.* And of the Goſpel, by a ſpecial kind of excellency it is affirmed, that *it is the good Word of God.* *Heb. 6. 5.* *And have taſted of the good Word of God.*

And to theſe we might adde many other teſtimonies of Scripture, where this Epithet and Title (*good*) is given to the Law and Word of God. But as before, in handling of the former Epithets of the Law and Word of God, ſo here alſo I hold it needful, to ſhew how, and in what reſpect, the Law and Word of God is ſaid to be good, and to make known, why it is called *the good Word of God.* And to this purpoſe know, that the Law and Word of God hath this Epithet and Title (*good*) given to it, in a threefold reſpect. The Law and Word of God is ſtyled with this title (*good*) in theſe three reſpects :

In reſpect of the Author of it. In reſpect of the Matter of it. And in reſpect of the effect, and of the end and uſe of it ; as firſt :

The Law and Word of God is good, in reſpect of the Author of it, becauſe it comes from God, it is his Word, who is goodneſſe it ſelf, the Fountain of all goodneſſe, and from whom comes nothing but that which is only good.

Secondly, the Law and Word of God is good, in reſpect of the matter of it : becauſe the matter of it is the wiſdom and will of God revealed, whoſe will onely is good, and the rule of all goodneſſe, and “ *the will of all creatures in heaven* ” or earth is ſo far forth good, as it conſents and agrees with the will of God “ revealed in the eternal Truth of his Word. And the Word of God doth not allow of, nor bear with the leaſt evil that is, but condemns all things that be evil, be they never ſo pleaſant, or never ſo profitable in the corrupt ſenſe and judgment of men, and threatens judgment againſt thoſe that are guilty of evil, and it commends all good things, and ſhews men every good way in which they are to walk and it contains promiſes of many good things both temporal and eternal, both belonging to the body and to the ſoul, and concerning this life, and that life that is to come, to thoſe that yeeld obedience to it.

Thirdly, the Law and Word of God is good in reſpect of the effect, and of the end and uſe of it : becauſe it makes men, of ill to become good ; as an inſtrument, it works grace and goodneſſe in them, it converts and turns a ſinner from evil to good, as *David* ſaith, *Pſal. 19. 7.* *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the ſoul.* And the Word of God, as an inſtrument, works in the heart true ſaving faith, and all other good graces of the Spirit, and makes men perfect to all good works, *2 Tim. 3. 17.* and it tends to this end, to make Gods Elect partakers of the greateſt good in this life, namely, of true comfort in Chriſt, and true peace of conſcience, and of the everlaſting good of their ſoules and bodies in the life to come. *1 Jam. 1. 21.* *It is able to ſave mens ſoules.* And therefore *Peter* ſaid to Chriſt, *Joh. 6. 68.* *Thou haſt the words of eternal life.* And *2 Tim. 3. 15.* ſaith the Apoſtle to *Timothy*, *Thou haſt known the holy Scriptures of a child, which are able to make thee wiſe unto ſalvation through the faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus.*

Thus then we ſee how, and in what reſpects the Law and Word of God is ſaid to be good. It comes from God, who is Goodneſſe it ſelf, and the Fountain of all goodneſſe, from whom nothing can come but Goodneſſe. It is the Wiſdome and Will of God revealed, whoſe Will only is good, and the Rule of all goodneſſe, and it condemns all evil whatſoever, threatening judgment to them that are guilty of evil, and it commends all good things, and ſhews men every good way in which they ought to walk : It contains ſweet promiſes of many good things both temporal and eternal, made to thoſe that yeeld obe-

The Law and Word of God is good in three reſpects.

1.

2.

Note.

3



dience to it, and as an instrument, it makes men, of ill to become good, turning them from evil to good, it works true ſaving faith, and all other good graces in the heart, and it tends to this end, to make Gods Chosen partakers of the greateſt good in this life, and of eternal good in the life to come: and therefore certainly, the Law and Word of God is a Truth that is truly good, and every way good.

*Uſe. 1.*  
A deceit of the  
Papiſts diſco-  
vered.

Now then this being ſo, it firſt diſcovers a deceit of the enemies of Gods Truth, the Papiſts. By this we may eaſily ſee, that they are no ſuch friends to good works, as they would make the world believe they are; they ſeem to carry a great zeal to good works, and they pretend to be ſuch friends to good works, as if none were like them, and they open their mouthes wide againſt us, as enemies to all good works. But indeed, if the matter be well examined, we ſhall find none greater enemies to good works then Papiſts are. For why? They take order to keep the people amongſt them, from the knowledge of Gods will revealed in his Law and Word; they ſtraightly charge the people, on pain of damnation, not to read the Book of God; and they will not ſuffer them to have the Scripture in their Mother tongue, in a Language known to them.

Now then conſider it; Is the Law and Word of God the Rule of goodneſſe, ſhewing men every good way, and teaching men what is good, and what is ill, and how good works are to be; and will they barr men from the knowledg of the Word of God, and not ſuffer them to have any acquaintance with it, and yet bear the world in hand, that they are the only friends and favourers of good works? Who is ſo ſimple, as ſees not their deceit? A man with half an eye may eaſily ſee, that their practice is in flat oppoſition to their words; they ſay one thing, and they practiſe another.

*Uſe 2.*  
We muſt ac-  
knowledge the  
Word of God  
to be every  
way good.

And for the uſe of the point to our ſelves: Is it ſo, that the Law and Word of God is truly good? Doth it commend all good things, and promiſe good to thoſe that yeeld obedience to it? and doth it condemn all evil, and threaten judgment to thoſe that are guilty of evil? Is it good in the promiſes, and good in the threatnings of it? Surely then, it muſt be ſo acknowledged, and ſo eſteemed of us; we muſt acknowledge the Word of God to be good, in promiſing good things; and good alſo, in condemning ill, and in threatening judgement againſt thoſe that are guilty of ſin, and as well good in the one, as in the other; yea, we muſt acknowledg the Word of God, applyed to the diſcovering, and to the condemning of our particular ſins, and the threatnings of it juſtly denounced againſt us for the ſame, to be the good Word of God. Thus did *Ezekiah, Iſa. 39. 8.* VWhen the Prophet came unto him, and told him of his particular ſin in ſhewing his treasures, and reprov'd him for it, and let him underſtand what evil the Lord would bring upon him for that ſin; ſaith *Hezekiah, The Word of the Lord is good, which thou haſt ſpoken:* I acknowledg the Word that thou haſt ſpoken, to be the good Word of God. Thus muſt we do; we muſt acknowledg the VWord of God in the miniſtery of it, diſcovering and condemning our ſins, and the threatnings of it applyed to us in regard of thoſe ſins, to be the good VWord of God.

Now, herein men come too ſhort, and they fail. Let the Word of mercy, and the VWord of comfort be delivered and preached, and every one is ready to hale and pull that to himſelf, though it belong not to him, and to acknowledge that, and to eſteem that to be the good VWord of God. But let the particular ſins whereof men are guilty, be diſcovered and condemned in the miniſtery and preaching of the VWord, and Judgments due to thoſe ſins be juſtly denounced, and men think that the VWord ſo applyed, is but the word of man, the word of the Preacher, and not the good word of God; they will not acknowledg that, and eſteem that as the good VWord of God, but hold and deem that to be the bare word of man.

Well, let ſuch perſons know, that the Lord in his juſt judgment will deal with them proportionably. Doſt thou hold and eſteem the Word diſcovering thy particular ſins, and condemning them, and threatening juſt Judgements

againſt



againſt thee for them, to be but the word of man, the word of the Preacher, and not the good Word of God? “Affure thy ſelf, the Lord in his juſt Judgment will puniſh thee in the ſame kind; and deal with thee accordingly in his Word of Mercy, and in his Word of comfort; he will make his Word of mercy and comfort to thee, but the word of man, a vaniſhing word, and a word that ſhall periſh with the breath of man; it ſhall not be the good Word of God to thee in time of need; thou ſhalt then find no comfort in it. Remember the example of *Herod*; *He heard John, and did many things, and heard him gladly, Mar. 6. 20.* yet when *John* told him of his particular ſin, and reprov- ed him for it, then he thought that was but *Johns* word, and not the Word of God, and he would be meet with *John* for it. And ſo indeed, the Lord, in his juſt judgment, made all that *Herod* heard from *John*, even the things he heard gladly, and took great comfort in (as he thought) to become unprofitable to him, and the Lord ſuffered him to rot and periſh in his ſins.

Note.

Learn we then to take heed of dividing between God and his Word, when his Word diſcovers our particular ſins, and threatens Judgments juſtly againſt us for the ſame: and of thinking the Word ſo applyed, to be but the word of man, and not the good Word of God, if we ſo do, we may juſtly look, that the Lord ſhould make his Word of comfort, not to be his good Word to us in the time of need, but only as the word of man. Let us therefore acknowledge the Word of God, both promiſing mercy and good things, and alſo juſtly threaten- ing Judgment againſt us for our ſins, to be the good Word of God; and then doubtleſſe we ſhall find the comforts of it, made good to us in time of need.

Laſtly, is it ſo, that the Law and Word of God is good, and the rule of all goodneſſe? Surely then, that is only good, that is agreeable to the Word of God; that is a good work, that is done according to the rule of the Word of God. And ſo the works which Papiſts ſo much boaſt and brag of, are no good works.

Uſe 3.

That onely is good, which is agreeable to Gods Word.

And for our ſelves, wouldſt thou have ground for that thou doſt, and be ſure that thou maiſt lawfully do it, and that it is good which thou doſt? Then go to the Word of God, adviſe with that, if the Word of God give thee warrant for the thing, it is good which thou doſt; if not, it is evil. *Micah. 6. 8.* *He hath ſhewn thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requireth of thee: Surely, to do juſtly, to love mercy, and to humble thy ſelf, to walk with thy God.* It is not thine own ſenſe, nor reaſon, nor cuſtome of time, nor examples of men, that can ſufficiently warrant the doing of any thing. No, no; look to the Word of God, if that warrant the thing thou doſt, either expreſſly or by good conſequent, it is good; if it do not, thou canſt not do it with any comfort.

## VERS. 13.

*Was then that which is good, made death unto me? God forbid: but ſinne, that it might appear ſin, wrought death in me, by that which is good, that ſin might be out of meaſure ſinful by the Commandement.*

**I**N this Verſe our Apoſtle propounds a new cavil, that ſome might, or haply did make againſt the Law of God, and answers to it; he wipes away a new calumny and ſlander that ſome might, and, it may be, did charge on the Law of God, namely this, that the Law ſhould be the cauſe of death, and the occaſion of this cavil and calumny, was from that the Apoſtle had delivered, *Verſ. 10, 11.* That on the coming of the Law ſin revived, and he dyed: and the ſame Commandement which was ordained unto life, was found to be unto him unto death. Sin took occaſion by the Commandement, and deceived him, and thereby ſue him. Here- upon ſome Cavillers were ready to object againſt the Apoſtle, and to lay a foul blot on the Law of God, and in this or the like manner to open their mouthes



against the Apostle, and to say, Thou sayest that the Law is good. Well, let that be granted, that the Law indeed is good in it self, and good to others : yet to thee it fell out as thou sayest to be death, it wounded thee. and it slue thee ; therefore that which is good to others, was made death to thee ; even the good Law of God was found to be the cause of death to thee : and so thou makest the Law a most pestilent and vile thing.

Now this cavil, and this calumny and slander, the *Apostle* first propounds, and then answers : and he propounds it very emphatically, by way of interrogation or question. *Was that then which is good, made death unto me ?* VVas the good Law of God the cause of death to me ? VVill you so affirm, and so gather from my speech ? Will it bear and bring forth such a Conclusion ?

To this the *Apostle* answers; first generally, No, and that by way of abhorring such a foul conclusion, (*God forbid,*) *Was that then which is good, made death unto me ?* *God forbid,* saith he : and then he subjoyns a more particular answer to this absurd conclusion ; and he shews, that not the Law, but sinne was the cause of death to him, and how sin was so the cause of death to him, namely, by working death in him by that which is good : and that is further amplified by the end of that working, or by the event that might follow on it ; as namely, this might be the event and issue of it, that the vilenesse of sinne might appear, *But sinne* (saith the *Apostle*) *that it might appear sin, wrought death in me by that which is good.* And that event he further explains in those words, *That sin might be out of measure sinful by the Commandement.* As if he had said, That sin might appear sin, that is, that sin might be out of measure sinful : adding further by what in particular, namely, *By the Commandement, that sin might be out of measure sinful by the Commandement.* And so we see the general matter of this Verse.

Interpretation

*Was that then which is good* ] By *that which is good*, the *Apostle* means the Law of God, to which in the Verse before he gave this Epithet and Title (*good*) *made death to me* : that is, made deadly, or the cause of death to me : the word (*Death*) being here put by a *Metonymie* of the effect for the cause ; and the *Apostle* here using an Interrogation, *Was that then which is good, made death to me ?* It is as if he had said, Will you that are given to cavil, concluding from mine own words affirm, that therefore the good Law of God was made deadly, or the cause of death to me ? Will that conclusion follow on my foregoing speech (*God forbid*) That, as we shewed, *Vers. 7.* is a phrase of abhorring, as if he had said, Far be it from us so to think : sic on it, it's an absurd thing so to imagine.

(*But sinne*) The word sin is here to be taken as before, for the corruption of nature ; as if he had said, But the corruption of my nature, that it might appear sin, that is, that it might appear, and be known to be that which indeed it is, even vile and filthy, and of a cursed nature (*wrought death in me.*) These words we shall easily understand, if we call to mind what was delivered in my exposition on *Vers. 8, 9, 10, 11.* The meaning of them is this, It was stirred up in me with greater violence to bring forth all manner of evil, and so it did in-fold me more deeply in death and damnation, and made me more lyable to the curse of the Law, and to the wrath of God, and my conscience was smitten and wounded, and I found my self as a dead man. (*By that which is good*) that is, on occasion of the good Law of God, it was so stirred up in me, and by the same Law I being guilty of the breach of it, my conscience was so smitten. (*That sin might appear sin.*) These words as we said, are an exposition of those, *that sin might appear sin* : and the meaning of them is this, That the corruption of my nature might shew it self extremely evil and vile, and might appear to be most wicked and cursed sin. (*By the Commandement*) that is, by the Commandement forbidding it and condemning it. Thus then briefly conceive we the *Apostles* meaning, as if he had spoken a little more plainly on this manner :



*Will you that are diſpoſed to cavill, caſt a further blot on the good Law of God, and from my former ſpeech conclude, that the good Law of God was made to me deadly, or the cauſe of death? Oh, far be it from us ſo to think: ſie on it, that is an abſurd concluſion; there is no ſuch matter: but indeed the corruption of nature; that the vile, filthy, and curſed nature of it might appear, an occaſion of the good Law of God, was ſtirred up in me, with greater violence to bring forth all manner of evil: ſo it did inſold me more deeply in death and damnation; and I being further guilty of the breach of it, it made me more lyable to the curſe of the Law, and to the wrath of God, and my conſcience was thereupon wounded and ſmiſſen, and I found my ſelf as a dead man, even by the good Law of God, I ſay, thus the corruption of my nature wrought in me by the good Law of God, that it might ſhow it ſelf extremely evil and vile, and might appear to be moſt wicked and curſed ſin, by the Commandement of God that forbade it, and condemned it.*

Here we ſee, that the Apoſtle is put to answer a new caviſ, and to wipe away a new calumny that ſome were ready to caſt on the good Law of God; there was cavilling againſt it before, and now again. Whence note we in a word, the nature of malicious cavillers and contradicting ſpirits, ſuch as are given to cavil againſt the truth, and to contradict it, their nature is never to be ſatisfied, but they have ever ſomething to object, and ſomething to ſay againſt the truth, be it never ſo cleere, and never ſo plainly laid before them.

*Doctrine 1.*  
The nature of malicious cavillers is, never to be ſatisfied.

And they are able to take ſome exception againſt it, and therefore it is no marvel, it is not a thing to be wondred at, when the truth that is grounded on the good Word of God, and made moſt cleere by evidence of Scripture, be it matter of faith or manners, as Uſury, Sabbath-breaking, and ſuch like, hath ſome to except againſt it and to contradict it; no marvel (I ſay) though ſome do cavil againſt things cleere delivered out of the Word of God: for indeed cavillers and contradicting ſpirits are never ſatisfied, their unſanctified wits delight in croſſing the truth, and as it is, 2 Tim. 3. 8. *As Jannes & Jambres withſtood Moſes, ſo theſe men alſo reſiſt the truth, and they are men of corrupt minds.* Let it ſuffice to have pointed at that.

The point I will ſtand on a little further, may thus be gathered: we ſee that the Apoſtle is here put to answer a new ſlander, brought againſt the good Law of God, that the good Law of God ſhould be deadly, or the cauſe of death to him, and ſo a moſt vile and peſtilent thing: this, the Apoſtle is here put to wipe away from the good Law of God. The point hence is this:

That the enemies of the truth, and cavillers, ſuch as are of unſanctified hearts and wits; they ſtick not to charge moſt vile things on the truth of God, and on the good things of God; they care not to charge the holy truth and good word of God, and the miniſterie and preaching of it, and other good things of God, to be the cauſe of much miſchief and many evils. And hence it was, that the holy men of God, the Prophets, publiſhing the Truth and the good things of God to the people, they have been held to be troubleſ of the State, and peſtilent and dangerous fellowes, even by publiſhing the holy Truth of God to do much evil. 1 King. 18. 17. ſaith Ahab to Elijah, *Art thou he that troubleſt Iſrael?* Act. 24. 5. ſaith Tertullianus, *Certainly we have found this man a peſtilent fellow, and a mover of ſedition among all the Jewes throughout the world.* And Matth. 11. 18, 19. The people charged Johns preſiſe and ſtriſt courſe, to be no better then devilſſa, and they ſaid he had a Devil. And again, Chriſt taking more liberty in the holy uſe of Gods creatures, they charged that holy courſe of his with intemperancy, they ſaid *he was a glutton and a drinker of wine.* Thus it hath been in all ages; we read in the Primitive times of the Church, the Goſpel was charged to be the cauſe of all evils: if any Plague or Judgment was ſent, the enemies of the Truth of God preſently laid the fault on the Goſpel, and the Chriſtians muſt forthwith be caſt to the Lions. And not to fetch proof of this ſo far off, Do not we ſee in our own times, and in our own woſul experience, that cavillers and men of unſanctified hearts and wits, ſtick not to charge moſt

*Doctrine 2.*  
Unſanctified wits & hearts commonly charge vile things on Gods Truth, and on good things.



foul things on the truth of God, and on the holy things of God? Do not some charge the ministry of the Word, and the preaching of it, to be the cause of all Schismes and heresies? yea, do not men sometimes utter it, when a Preacher is sent to a people, and is careful to do his duty faithfully; that if they should follow him and his preaching, he would make them all fools and mad-men, and they should soone goe out of their wits? This we see or may see in our own times. Now what are the reasons of this? surely these:

*Reason. 1.*

First, the Devil he bears a deadly hatred and strong malice against the truth of God, and the good things of God; and men of unsanctified hearts and wits, especially if they have pregnant wits, are fit instruments for him to use, in defaming and disgracing of the Truth of God; and the holy things of God, and being unsanctified, they are ready to be employed in that service.

2.

Again, men of unsanctified hearts and wits, are commonly such as will not believe the truth of God, and yeeld obedience to it; and therefore they are justly given over to the spirit of calumny: and so it comes to passe, that cavillers, and men of unsanctified hearts and wits, stick not to charge most vile things on the holy Truth of God, and on the good things of God. This therefore may serve to arm and strengthen us against the clamours and vile slanders of the Papists, cast on the truth we hold and teach, calling it heresie and the like: yea, this may serve to arm and strengthen us against the clamours and speeches of ungodly men amongst us: we are not to stand amazed and wonder at it, when we hear ungodly men open their mouthes wide against the ministry of the Word, and against the holy profession of the truth; when we hear men say, There was never good world, since there was so much preaching and so much professing: Here is a vile place indeed, here is so much preaching and so much professing in it, as that men cannot now be merry in this place, and they cannot use that good neighbourhood in it as they were wont.

*Use 1.*  
Strength against the vile slanders, that the papists cast on our doctrine, And against other clamours also.

When we hear men utter these, or the like speeches, we are not to think it a strange thing; thus it hath been, and thus it will be to the end of the world: cavillers and men of unsanctified hearts and wits, will charge most vile things on the holy truth of God, and on the holy profession of the truth, and on the Professors of it.

*Object.*

It may be, thou that art a looker on, an indifferent man, a civil honest man, wilt say, Surely there would not be such opposition against them, and such vile things charged on them, unlesse the cause were in them selves: they are troublesome persons, and busie bodies, and none can live quietly by them. Thou art deceived. Indeed the Devil cannot live quietly by them: and therefore he stirres up his Instruments to charge vile things on the truth of God, and on the profession of the Truth, and on the professors of it. And herein appears the vilenesse of wicked and ungodly men, in that they dare charge vile things on the holy truth of God, and on the holy profession of it. The Devil dare not say that true Religion is Heresie, and that sound and sincere profession of the truth of God is hypocrisie. Herein then they are worse then the Devil.

*Note.*

*Use 2.*

True professors of the Gospel must carry themselves answerable to their profession

Again, is it so, that cavillers, and men of unsanctified hearts and wits, stick not to charge most vile things on the holy truth of God, and on the holy things of God? Then true professors of the truth must look to themselves, that they carry themselves answerable to that holy profession, and give the wicked and ungodly no just cause to speak evil of them: for are ungodly men grown to that height of impudency, that they dare charge vile things on the holy truth of God, and on the holy things of God? Certainly then, much more will they charge foul things on thee that art a professor of the Truth of God; if thou give them just occasion to speak evil of thee, they will then open their mouthes wide against thee, and insult over thee exceedingly. And therefore let such as profess the truth sincerely, labour to shine as lights in the midst of a naughty and crooked generation.

In the next place observe we, that the Apostle having propounded that absurd



absurd cavil and slander, that some were ready to charge on the Law of God, that the good Law of God should be deadly, or the cause of death to him : having (I say) propounded that by way of Interrogation, *Was that then which is good, made death to me?* he answers it negatively, and that with a detestation, and an abhorring of such foul conclusions : (*God forbid:*) far be it from us so to think : oh. fie on it, that is a very absurd conclusion. Hence we are given to understand thus much :

That is a very absurd thing, it is a thing against all reason to charge the good Law of God to be deadly, and to be the cause of death to any one. The good Law of God is not to be charged to be the cause of any mans spiritual death ; that doth not properly, as a working cause, wound the conscience of any, nor of it self make any lyable to death and damnation. Indeed, the good Law of God justly threatens death and damnation to such as are guilty of the breach of it, the curse of the Law being annexed to it, and this being joyned to the Law, that *curst is every one that continueth not in all things written in the Book of the Law, to do them :* but yet it is a wrong to the Law, and an imputation falsely cast upon it, to say that it is the proper cause of death and damnation, and that it properly, as a cause, brings forth the wound of conscience, or of it self makes any lyable to death and damnation.

*Doctrine 3.*

It is very absurd, to charge the good Law of God, to be the cause of death and damnation to any.

We know that the Laws of the Kingdom threaten death to such as are guilty of Treason, Murther, Theft, and other capital crimes, and they condemn such to death as are found guilty of those crimes : but yet it were a wrong, and a slander falsely laid on the Laws, to say that they, of themselves, and as causes, make men lyable and subject to death, and that they bring forth that effect of themselves. And so indeed *the Law of God* (as it is) *Rom. 4. 15. causeth wrath,* that is, it shewes men that are guilty of the breach of it, their guiltinesse, and it pronounceth sentence of death and damnation against them, it shewes them that by reason of their guiltinesse, they are lyable to death and damnation ; but to say, that the Law of God is the proper cause of death and damnation to any, or of it self wounds the conscience, or makes any lyable to death and damnation, that is absurd, and that is against reason, and a thing unjustly charged on the good Law of God. For why? *The good Law of God, as the Apostle saith, Vers. 10. was ordained to life.* And *Dent. 30. 15. Moses* having published the good Law of God to the people, he saith, *Behold, I have set before thee this day life and good ;* and if the good Law of God be kept and observed perfectly, without fayling in any jot or tittle of it, it is able to give life and salvation, according to that, *Levit. 18. 5. Ye shall keep therefore my Statutes and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall then live in them.* And the same is again repeated, *Ezech. 20. 11. And I gave them my Statutes, and declared my Judgments unto them, which if a man do, he shall live in them.*

Again, the good Law of God being perfectly good, and every way good, as before we shewed, it cannot of it self properly, as a working cause, wound the conscience of any, or make any lyable to death and damnation. And therefore, to charge the good Law of God to be the proper cause of the wound of conscience, or the proper cause of death and damnation to any, it is a wrong to the Law of God, and an imputation falsely cast on it.

Sometimes it is said, that the good VVord of God shall rise up in judgement against men, and condemn them ; and it is said to be a favour of death unto some.

*Object.*

Not the VVord, as it is the good Word of God ; but as it is cast aside and disobeyed : and again, it is a favour of death to some, not in it self, and in its own nature, but accidentally, through the corruption of mans heart.

*Ans.*

Now this I note, to shew the error of some mens judgment, to shew that some are deceived in their opinion, touching the working and effect of the good VVord of God. Some think and have this conceit, that the good VVord of God is many times the proper cause of inward trouble, and distemper, and dis-

*Use.*  
The error of some mens judgment, touching the working and

quietnesse



effect of the  
good Word of  
God discove-  
red.

quietnesse of mind, and that the reading and hearing of the good word of God, is the very cause that some become mad, and are distracted, yea that some lay violent hands on themselves; they charge the reading and hearing of the good word of God, to be the cause of these foul evils.

This is the subtilty of Satan; and men that have no love nor liking to the Word of God, are ready to joyne with Satan, thus to discountenance and to disparage the reading and hearing of the good Word of God. Indeed it is true, that men, in reading and hearing the good Word of God, are sometimes brought to trouble of mind & conscience. But what then? Is the reading or hearing of the good Word of God, the proper cause of that trouble? No, no; the proper cause of it, is their own guiltinesse of sin, the good Word of God read or heard, is a means to shew men their sins and guiltinesse; and thereupon they are wounded in soul, and troubled in mind and conscience: and so their trouble in that kind comes not from the word of God, as the proper cause of it, but from their own guiltinesse of sin. A Physitian shews a man some dangerous disease in his body, that he knew not of before; and thereupon the man is troubled and much discouraged, Is the Physitian the proper cause of that trouble and discouragement? Surely no. But the disease of his body now made known to him. So is it in this case; the good Word of God shews men their guiltinesse of sin, and thereupon they are troubled; the proper cause of that trouble is not the good Word of God, but their own guiltinesse.

Quest.

Haply then thou wilt say, VVere it not better that men should forbear the reading or hearing of the VVord? or at least, not read or hear so much, as thereby to be brought to that trouble of mind and conscience?

Ans<sup>w</sup>.

I answer, No: for the trouble of mind for sin is good, if it fall not into utter despair.

But you will say, It doth fall into utter despair: and many times that it doth so, is through mens own weaknesse, and the fault is in themselves; The Gospel, even the sweet doctrine of the Gospel doth sometimes more wound the conscience, then any other thing: and is the fault in the doctrine of the Gospel? No; but in the parties own weaknesse, that cannot take hold of the promises of it.

We may not then conclude against the reading or hearing the good VVord of God: or say, It is not good to read or hear so much, because trouble of mind followes on it. Trouble of mind for sin is good, if it fall not into despair; and the fault is in men themselves, if it so do, in that they cannot take hold of the comforts offered unto them in the good VVord of God. And therefore take we heed of charging that on the good VVord of God, on the reading or hearing of it, that indeed comes not from it; and let it be far from us to think that the good VVord of God, or the reading or hearing of it, is the proper cause of trouble of mind, of madnesse or distraction. If we charge these things on the good Word of God, we wrong it, and lay an imputation falsely upon it.

Now touching the Apostles particular answer to that slander charged by some on the Law of God. In that he saith that *sinne*, that is, the corruption of his nature, wrought death in him, that is, was stirred up by the good Law of God; we might hence shew the pravity and perversnesse of the corruption of nature, that it takes occasion to stirre, and work, and break out on the good Law of God. But that point we have heretofore handled: therefore I passe by it.

Now in that the Apostle saith, that the corruption of his heart wrought death in him: Hence we are plainly taught,

Doctrine 4.  
Mans wicked  
and corrupt  
heart abuseth  
the best  
things.

That the wicked and corrupt heart of man abuseth the best things: such is the poyson of our corrupt nature, if it be left to it self, and not renewed or restrained, as it poysons every thing it meets withall, it perverts the best things, and it works the bane and destruction of men, even by the good and holy things of God. As by the good Word of God, it turns that to a *savour of death*, 2 Cor. 2. 16. by the Sacrament, it makes a man *guilty of the blood of Christ*, and to eat and drink



drink his own damnation, 1 Cor. 11. 27, 29. So by the ſweet and comfortable doctrine of the Goſpel, the doctrine of Faith, and free Juſtification in the ſight of God, the corrupt heart of man turns that to a ground of carnal ſecurity and liberty, Jude Epistle Verſ. 4. So the moſt ſweet and holy attributes of God, his goodneſſe, his mercy, his patience, the corrupt heart of man abuſeth all theſe, and even by theſe it works the bane and deſtruction of men. 1 Rom. 2. 4. *Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his bountifulneſſe, and patience, and long ſufferance?* Thereby implying, that the wicked and corrupt heart of man abuſeth theſe things to deſtruction. I might inſtance in many other particulars, and ſhew that the corrupt heart of man works the ruine and deſtruction of men, even by the beſt and moſt holy things of God. And the reaſon of it is this,

The mind of man left to it ſelf, ſees not the good uſe of good things: and the heart of man left to it ſelf, hath no love nor liking to any good thing; nay, it is averſe, and repugnant, and in flat oppoſition to the good uſe of every thing; and therefore no marvel though the wicked and corrupt heart of man left to it ſelf, do abuſe the beſt things, and work the bane of men, even by the good and holy things of God.

Reason

By this we may eaſily conceive the miſerable ſtate and condition of all ſuch as are in their natural ſtate; their caſe and condition is fearful: for why? they bring deſtruction on themſelves, not only by ſoul groſſe ſins, but by good things, yea, by the good and holy things of God, even by thoſe things that ſhould do them moſt good. And what a miſerable condition is that, that men ſhould be in that ſtate, that their own corrupt hearts ſhould work their bane by thoſe things, that ſhould be to their good, and to their comfort both in this life, and in the life to come?

Uſe. I

The miſerable ſtate of ſuch as be in their natural condition, diſcovered.

And ſuch is the ſtate and condition of all ſuch as are yet in their natural condition; their own wicked and corrupt hearts, being left to themſelves, do work their bane and deſtruction, not only by ſuch ſins as the world take notice of to be dangerous and pernicious, but by the good and holy things of God. Men commonly bleſſe themſelves, becauſe (as they think) they are free from groſſe ſins, they live civilly and orderly in the world. Alas, this they may do, and yet work their own bane and deſtruction by good things, even by the good things of God: and this indeed men do being yet in their natural ſtate and condition; and their wicked and corrupt hearts do work their own bane and deſtruction, by the good and holy things of God, by the good Word of God, by the Sacraments, by the goodneſſe and mercy of God; and they ſhall one day find, if they have no other ſoul ſins, which is a thing impoſſible, yet they continuing in theſe ſins, their abuſe of the good things of God, ſhall ſmite their hearts, and wound their conſciences, and bring utter ruine and deſtruction on them.

Oh then let ignorant and unrepentant perſons take notice of their fearful condition. Art thou an ignorant man or woman? or a man or woman unrepentant? Thou art in a fearful condition. Thine own wicked heart works thy woe and thy deſtruction, not only by groſſe ſins, but even by the good and holy things of God. Oh, therefore think on it, and haſten out of that fearful ſtate and condition.

In the next place obſerve we, that the Apoſtle ſaith, *Sin wrought death in him by that which is good.* He adds further, *That ſin might appear ſin,* that is, as we ſhewed, that the vile, filthy, and curſed nature of it might appear. And he explains that in the laſt words; *And that ſin might be out of meaſure ſinful by the Commandment,* that is, that ſin might ſhew it ſelf extremely evil, and vile, and moſt wicked and curſed ſin, it breaking out againſt the good Commandment of God. The point hence is this:

\* That then ſin ſhews it ſelf moſt vile and filthy, and of a curſed nature indeed, when it breaks out againſt that which is good, and ſhould be a means to keep it in; then ſin appears moſt odious and foul, and it is a fearful aggravation of ſin, and makes it out of meaſure ſinful, when it breaks out againſt the good means

Doct. 5.

\* Sin is then moſt vile and filthy, when it breaks out againſt the means that ſhould keep it in.

that



that should restrain it, and should keep it in. And hence it is, that holy men of God, when they would make sin, sin committed, to appear most vile, and most foul, they have laid it forth, not only as a breach and transgression of the Law of God, but they have further laboured to set it out, as a thing done against knowledg. against conscience, against the good means of restraint, which the Lord had vouchsafed, yea, as a sin committed against the mercy of God, and they have clothed it with the circumstances of time, of place, of person, that might aggravate the sin, and make it appear more foul and more heinous.

Thus dealt *Nathan* with *David*, 2 Sam. 12. 7. He not only told *David*, Vers. 7. that he was the man that had sinned, but he proceeded further, and told him, that he was the man whom the Lord had anointed King over Israel, and delivered out of the hand of *SAUL*, and had given him his Lords house, and would moreover, if that had been too little, have given him such and such things: and that he had sinned in secret and close manner, as if *Uriah* had not been killed by him, but that the sword of the children of *Ammon* had slain him.

Thus the holy Prophet laboured to make the vilenesse of *David*s sin to appear, by bringing to his mind Gods mercy in his advancement, his contempt of Gods Commandement, and his cunning dealing in committing of that sin. And thus dealt *Samuel* with *Saul*, 1 Sam. 15. 17. He laid before *Saul* the Lords gracious dealing with him in his advancement, in that when he was little in his own sight, the Lord made him Head over the Tribes of Israel, for the Lord anointed him King over Israel, and thereby shewed him, that his sin was most vile, in sparing *Agag* and the best of the sheep and Oxen, in that his wicked heart had made him sin against such mercies vouchsafed unto him.

And this aggravation of sin we find used by the Prophet in expresse termes, *Isa. 26. 10. Let mercy be shewed to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness: in the Land of uprightness he will do wickedly.* As if he had said, Herein appears the vile and cursed nature of the wicked, that thou the Lord vouchsafe mercy to them, yet they will still be wicked, and they will not learn to do well; nay, in the land of uprightness, amongst many occasions and means of good, they will do wickedly. And therein appears the vilenesse and cursednesse of their corrupt nature; and so the Prophet plainly confirms this point, That then sin appears most foul, and it is a fearful aggravation of it, and makes it out of measure sinful, when it breaks out against the good means that should restrain it, when it breaks out against knowledg. against conscience, against the mercies of God, and the like. And the reason of it is this;

Sin breaking out against the good means that should keep it in, therein it shewes it self to be of the greatest force and strength; and the stronger it is being vile, the more vile it is, and therefore this we may conclude as a certain truth, that then sin appears most foul, and it is a fearful aggravation of it, and then it is out of measure sinful, when it breaks out against the good means that should restrain it and keep it in.

**Use. 1.**  
The sins of many discovered to be most odious and foul.

Now then, this serves first to discover to us, that the sins of many in the world are most odious and most foul: for indeed the sins of too many want not this circumstance of aggravation, they are committed against knowledge, against conscience, against the cleer light of the Word of God, and against the good means of restraint the Lord hath vouchsafed unto them. Can the Drunkard, the unclean person, the proud person, can these and the like plead ignorance, or the want of means to restrain them? No certainly, they cannot: and therefore their sins are committed against knowledge, and against conscience, and so they are most vile and most filthy. The sin of ignorance is not excusable, because men have in them sufficient light to leave them without excuse: but when men have a further light given them, and sin against that, that is most fearful, and then is their sin out of measure sinful; and without great repentance shall find a proportionable punishment, even more fearful punishment.

Again,



Again, is it so, that sin is most foul and filthy, and it is a fearful aggravation of it, and makes it out of measure sinful, that it breaks out against the good means that should restrain it and keep it in? Surely, then sin may justly be taxed as more vile, in that respect that it hath been committed against knowledge, against conscience, against the good means, against the clear light of the Gospel, and against the evidence of Truth, that hath been taught, and men are not to think much when their sins are thus laid before them with those necessary circumstances of aggravation. Men commonly think they are disgraced too much, when their sins are thus laid before them. But they must know, that this is the way to bring men to see the vileness of their sins, and to bring them out of love and liking of them: Yea, this is the way to strip men of all colourable excuses, as of their own infirmity, the example of others, or the like. For what shall a man be able to plead in defence of his sin, when his own knowledge, conscience, good means, and mercies of God vouchsafed unto him shall plead against him, as Christ said, *Joh. 15. 22. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they should not have had sin, but now have they no cloke for their sins.*

*Use 2.*  
Sin may be justly taxed as more vile, in respect of circumstances of aggravation.

And so it may justly be said to men having the means of good, and many mercies bestowed on them, if they had not had those means and those mercies vouchsafed, they should not have had so great sin. but now they have no cloke for their sin. Therefore sin must thus be laid before men, that the vileness of it may appear, yea, we are thus to acknowledge sin, and to make confession of it to God, when we humble our selves in the confession and acknowledgment of our sins. "*It is not enough to confesse in general that we are sinners, no, nor yet to confesse sin in particular: but we must adde the circumstances of aggravation, we must confesse it with all circumstances by which it hath been made more foul and filthy, as that it hath been done against knowledge, against conscience, against the good means vouchsafed unto us.*" Thus did *Ezra, Ezra 9.* and thus did *Daniel, Dan. 9.* The Lord sees sin in the vileness of it, and he will have us so to lay it before him in the acknowledgment of it, that we may thereby testify our hatred and loathing of it, and that it is vile to us and in our eyes, or else we can never look to find mercy from him for the pardon of it.

*Note.*

#### VERS. 14.

*For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

**I**N this Verse our *Apostle* first brings an argument, to prove that the Law was not the cause of death to him, taken from the nature of the Law, that the Law in the nature of it, is spiritual, and therefore cannot be the cause of death: and this, that the Law is spiritual, is further set forth, as a thing well known to the *Apostle* and to other true Believers; *For we know* (saith he) *that the Law is spiritual.*

Then in the words following, he speaks of himself, and sets forth himself as standing in an opposite and contrary state to the Law of God, and saith, that he was carnal, and he addes to that, *Sold under sin.* The Law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. And so he falls on the third and last part of this Chapter; he makes an entrance and passage to it: which part is continued from this Verse, to the end of the Chapter: and the summe of it is thus much; A troubled complaint of the *Apostle*, that though he were regenerate, and had received a great measure of grace and sanctification, yet through the remainders of sin still abiding in him, he was far from that he ought to be, and far from that the Law of God required at his hands, and that he was even carnal, in respect of the spiritual nature of the Law of God: and so a setting forth, in his own example, of the combat between the flesh and Spirit, in them that are truly regenerate.



Now touching the combat between the flesh and Spirit in them that are truly regenerate: The *Apostle* first layes it forth in his own example, from this 14. Verse, to the 24. and then he shews the issue of it, still insilling in his own example, *Vers. 24, 25.*

1. The combat is laid forth in three degrees. As first, in that he by sin was brought to do that evil, which he would not, therein shewing an opposition between the Law commanding, and his will consenting, and sin over-ruling him, and his flesh obeying, and that is in *Vers. 15, 16, 17.*
2. The second degree is, that he was hindered by sin, from doing the good which he would: this is propounded *Vers. 18.* and proved: First, by the contrary effects, *Vers. 19.* and then by the contrary cause, the Law moving to good, and he thereunto consenting, and sin hindering him, *Vers. 20, 21.*
3. The third degree is, in that his delight was in good, touching the inner man, but yet was led captive, by the Law of his members, to sin, *Vers. 22, 23.*

Then, touching the issue of this combat, the *Apostle* first desires to be freed from this spiritual bondage and captivity, *Vers. 24.* and then gives thanks for his freedom in and through Christ, in that in him he was thus far freed, as that he was not wholly captived to sin, but in his mind he served the Law of God *Vers. 25.* And thus we see the general matter of the third and last part of this Chapter.

In this 14. Verse, as I said, the *Apostle* yeelds a reason why the Law of God is not the cause of death: because *the Law is spiritual*, delivering that as a known truth, and then he sets himself as standing in a contrary state to the Law, that *he was carnal*, and adds to that, that *he was sold under sin.*

Interpretation

*For we know, (We know)* that is, both I and you know this; this is a truth which we know well, and wherewith we are well acquainted, *that the Law:* The word (*Law*) is here to be taken, as before, for the Moral Law of God, and that Law is here said to be spiritual; and for the understanding of that Epithet, we are to mark that the *Apostle* here opposeth *Spiritual* to *Carnal*: *the Law is spiritual, but I am carnal.* As it is a usual thing with him to oppose flesh and Spirit, *Rom 8. 1, 5, 6, &c.* so here he opposeth *Spiritual* to *Carnal*; and his meaning is this, That the Moral Law of God is in the nature of it, most pure, and perfect, heavenly and divine, and this it is, both in respect of the Author of it, because it comes from God, who is a Spirit, and it is the revealed Will and Wisdom of God, touching all moral duties; and also in respect of the matter of it, because it requires spiritual, that is, heavenly, Angelical, and Divine obedience, even absolute, exact and perfect purity both of heart and life, it requires a perfect conformity to it, not only in the outward man, but also in the very heart, and soul, and Spirit, as well inward as outward, yea, as well in mans nature, as in his actions; so is the moral Law of God said to be spiritual.

*But I am carnal, sold under sin.* Some make question, whether the *Apostle* here spake of himself, as he was now an *Apostle* and truly regenerate, or no. Doubtlesse he did: for he speaks of himself in the time present, *I am carnal*; not in the time past, as before, *Vers. 8, 9, 10, 11.*

Quest.

Why? but will some say, Was *Paul*, being an holy *Apostle*, and a man truly regenerate, carnal?

Ans.

I answer, Yes, he was, if we rightly conceive his meaning; namely, thus. He was not simply and altogether carnal, as unregenerate persons be, he was not in the flesh, as *Vers. 5.* not altogether flesh, as *Joh. 3. 6.* *That which is born of the flesh is flesh.* But yet he was in some respect carnal; as first, in respect of that perfect integrity, uprightness, or (as I may so speak) that spirituality that is taught and required in the Law of God; and doubtlesse, this he intended. in setting these two one against the other, spiritual and carnal. *The Law is spiritual, but I am carnal.* As if he had said, It is heavenly and Divine, it requires Angelical and Divine obedience: but alas, I come far short of that uprightness, and that spirituality that the Law requires, I am even carnal, in respect of it.

Secondly,



Secondly, the *Apoſtle* was carnal, and might juſtly ſay of himſelf, that *he was carnal*, in reſpect of perfect regeneration; that though he were truly regenerate, yet he was regenerate but in part, not perfectly, and that he was ſtill in part carnal, and had ſtill the reliques of original corruption abiding in him, and carnal infirmities ſtill cleaving unto him; as Ignorance, Unbelief, Doubting, and the like. And thus we are to underſtand the *Apoſtle*, in ſaying that *he was carnal*; that he was not ſo ſimply, and altogether as unregenerate perſons be, but in reſpect of that uprightneſſe of the Law, and in reſpect of perfect regeneration.

He adds further, (*ſold under ſin.*) This Phraſe is borrowed from bondmen or captives: and the *Apoſtle's* meaning is, that he was as a bondman or captive under ſin, the corruption of his nature: and that we may conceive how, know, that one may be a bondman, either by ſelling himſelf into captivity and willingly obeying a Tyrant, or by being brought into captivity againſt his will: as *Joſeph* was ſold into captivity by his brethren. And this was *Paul's* caſe here, in reſpect of ſin, he was a bondman under ſin unwillingly; he ſold not himſelf, as *Ahab* did, to work wickedneſſe: but he was held unwillingly under the power of his corruption, and by that he was drawn to many things he allowed not, as he expounds himſelf in the Verſes following: and that is his meaning, when he ſaith, *he was ſold under ſin.* Thus then conceive we his meaning in the words of this Verſe, as if he had ſaid,

*Both you, and I, even all of us know this to be a truth, we well underſtand it, that the moral Law of God is, in the nature of it, moſt pure and perfect, heavenly and divine, being breathed out from the Spirit of God, and requiring heavenly, Angelical, and divine obedience, even abſolute and perfect purity and holineſſe, both of heart and life, and perfect conformity to it in the very heart, ſoul and Spirit, and as well inward as outward, and as well in mans nature, as in his actions: but alas, I muſt needs acknowledge this of my ſelf, if I look into my ſelf, and compare my ſelf with that uprightneſſe, and that ſpirituality of Gods Law, and duly conſider the imperfection of my regeneration, having ſtill the reliques of original corruption abiding in me, and carnal infirmities cleaving unto me, that I am in theſe reſpects carnal, and earthly, and that I am ſold as a bondman and captive, againſt my will, under the power of mine own corruption.*

We are here firſt to conſider the Epithet and Title given to the Moral Law of God, that it is ſpiritual, and the point hence is that which is intended by this Epithet, namely this,

That the Moral Law of GOD is in the nature of it heavenly, Angelical, and Divine, and it requires heavenly and Angelical obedience; it requires that men conform themſelves to it, and yeeld obedience to it, not onely in the outward man, but alſo in the moſt inward motions of their minds, wils, and affections, and in their very ſpirits, and thoughts: yea, it requires every way, abſolute, exact, and perfect obedience in ſoul and body: and to this purpoſe we have plain evidence of Scripture, *Deut. 6. 5. 6. Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind, and theſe words which I command thee this day ſhall be in thine heart. Luk. 10. 27. the Expounder of the Law ſaith thus, It is written in the Law, Thou ſhalt love thy Lord God with all thine heart, with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength, and with all thy thought. And thus Chriſt himſelf expounds the moral Law of God, Mat. 5. in many Verſes of it, as 22, 28, 34, &c. And he gives the ſpiritual ſenſe of the Law, and ſhews that it reacheth to the moſt inward motions of the mind, will and affections, and that it requires abſolute and perfect obedience, as well in the ſoul, as in the body, and in the very ſpirits and thoughts of men: The reaſon of it is this;*

The moral Law of God being breathed out from the Spirit of God, it expreſſeth the mind of God, and the Will of God, touching all moral matters, and as the Prophet ſaith, *Iſai. 55. 8. Gods thoughts are not our thoughts, nor Gods Will our will: but his thoughts, his mind, and his will, are like to himſelf, moſt*

*Doctrine I.*  
The Moral Law of God is of an heavenly and divine nature, and it requires a proportionable obedience.

*Reason.*



heavenly, and most spiritual; and therefore the moral Law of God must needs be in the nature of it, Heavenly, Angelical, and Divine, and requiring obedience; in no sort favouring of the flesh, nor such as men think and judge to be good, but Heavenly and Angelical, and that which is every way absolute and perfect, and as well in soul as in body.

*Use 1.*  
Gods Law must  
be spiritually  
understood.

And this serves to teach us how the Law of God must be understood, namely, spiritually; it being in the nature of it, heavenly and spiritual, it must be spiritually understood. The Pharisees in their time mis-understood the Law of God, and many in our time mis-understand it, many think, that men may understand the Law of God by the strength of natural reason, and they stick not sometimes to say, that if the Law of God be but read to the people, it is sufficient. Why, say they, who knowes not this, that it is a sin to kill, to steal, and the like? Alas, such men look on the Law of God with a wrong eye, they look on it with the eye of natural reason, and that eye is not able to see the uprightness of the Law of God, and to discern the spirituality of it; and such men have a vail over their eyes, 2 Cor. 3. 15. They rest in the outward rind and bark of the Law of God, they see not the pith and marrow of it. If we would rightly understand the Law of God, we must labour to understand it spiritually, and to find out the spiritual sense and meaning of it.

*Use 2.*  
No man is able  
in time of this  
life, perfectly  
to fulfill the  
Law of God in  
his own per-  
son.

Again, is it so, that the Law of God, in the nature of it, is heavenly and spiritual, and requires heavenly and Angelical obedience? who then is able in time of this life, in his own person, perfectly to fulfil the Law of God? who is able to attain to that perfect purity the Law of God requires? Surely, none living being a meer man: and therefore it is a dream of the Papists, to say that men may perfectly fulfil the Law of God in this life, in their own persons, and may merit by their works, and do works of supererogation: these be fancies of idle brains.

*Use 3.*  
We must yeeld  
internal and  
spiritual obe-  
dience to Gods  
Law.

Lastly, is it so, that the Law of God is in the nature of it, heavenly and spiritual, requiring heavenly and Angelical obedience to it, as well in soul as in body? Surely, then we may not think it enough to conform our selves to the Law of God in outward actions only. No, no; we must yeeld internal and spiritual obedience to the Law of God; the Law of God, in commanding outward good works, and in forbidding outward evil deeds, commands and forbids the very first motions and desires of those works, and therefore we must labour in truth, though we cannot perfectly, yet in truth to yeeld obedience to the Law of God, not only in our bodies, but also in our hearts, souls and Spirits.

In the next place observe we, that the *Apostle* doth not barely affirm this of the Law of God, that it is spiritual; but he affirms it as a known thing, a thing well known to himself and other true believers. We know (saith the *Apostle*;) both I, and you, and all true believers are well acquainted with this, that the Law is spiritual, and that the Law of God, in the nature of it, is heavenly and spiritual; this we know. The point hence is this,

*Doctrine 2.*  
True believers  
see and discern  
the spiritual  
nature of the  
whole Word of  
God.

That true Believers, such as are truly enlightened, they know the spiritual nature of the Law of God, they rest not in the letter of the Law, but they see and discern the spirituality of it, and they are well acquainted with it; yea such as are truly enlightened, they know and understand, and they see and discern the spiritual nature of the whole Word of God, they are acquainted with the Spirit and Life of the whole Word of God, both of the Law and of the Gospel: *The Word of God dwells in them*, as it is *Coloss. 3. 16.* and they know not only the outward face of the Word of God, but they are acquainted with the inward purpose and meaning of it, and the nature of it, as they know the nature, and disposition, and very purpose of the heart of one that dwells with them, and with whom they do converse familiarly, and are inwardly acquainted.

And to this purpose the *Apostle* saith, *Coloss. 1. 9.* that he prayed for the *Colossians*, that *they might be fulfilled with knowledge of the will of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*, that they might come to the wise and spiritual understanding



ding of the Will of God revealed in his Word. And thus also he prayed for the Ephesians. *Ephes. 1. 18. That the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened, that they might know not only the letter and story of the Gospel, but the sweet and excellent things of it, the hope of his calling, and the riches of his glorious inheritance in his Saints. Such as are truly enlightened, they know, and they understand, and they discern the spiritual nature of the Word of God, and they are acquainted with the Spirit and Life of it. For why?*

God gives to true Believers his Spirit, and the Spirit of God reveals to them the secrets of God, *Psal. 25. 14.* that is, not onely such things as may be known by the common gift of illumination, but the deep and hidden things of God, even the things which eye hath not seen, neither ear hath heard, nor have entred into mans heart, *1 Cor. 2. 9.* And therefore they rest not in the letter of the Law of God, nor in the letter of the Gospel, but they see and discern the spiritual nature of the Law, that the Law is heavenly, Angelical and Divine, and requires heavenly and Angelical obedience, and they are acquainted with the marrow and sweetness of the Gospel.

By this then let us try our selves, touching our knowledg and understanding of the Word of God, whether we be truly enlightened or no. By this we may know it; Do we rest in the Letter of the Law, or do we stick in the letter of the Gospel, and go no further? Let us not deceive our selves, we have no true understanding either of the Law or of the Gospel; we may soothe up our selves, but indeed we are not truly enlightened. Such as are truly enlightened, they see and discern the spiritual nature of the Law, and they are well acquainted with the sweet and excellent comforts of the Gospel.

Why, will some say, How shall I be sure that I see and discern the spiritual nature of the Law, and that I am well acquainted with the sweet comforts of the Gospel?

I answer, Thou mayst be sure that thou dost see the spiritual nature of the Law, if so be thy knowledge of the Law do cause thee not to rest in an outward conformity to it, in a civil honest carriage and behaviour, which is a dangerous thing to rest in: but to labour for inward reformation of thine own heart, and that thine heart and inward affections may be conformed to the Law of God.

And again, thou mayst be sure that thou art well acquainted with the sweet comforts of the Gospel, if thou be affected with them according to the excellency and worth of them, and thou makest them thy chief *Treasure*, and thy desire after them is insatiable, and especially, if thou find the sweetness and comfort of them in time of thy greatest trouble. If it be thus with thee, certainly, then thou art truly enlightened, and thou dost see and discern the spiritual nature of the Law, and thou art well acquainted with the sweet comforts of the Gospel: and if it be not thus with thee, assure thy self thou art not truly enlightened.

Come we to that the *Apostle* speaks of Himself. Having said, *The Law is spiritual*, he subjoyns (*but I am carnal, sold under sin*) he falls, as we see, into a troubled complaint in regard of himself, that in respect of the spiritual nature of the Law of God, and in respect of perfect regeneration, he was carnal, and sold under sin.

Now then, the *Apostle* being an holy and sanctified vessel, a man truly regenerate, and a man that had attained a great measure of grace and sanctification, and thus complaining and acknowledging thus much of himself, that he was carnal, sold under sin, we are given to understand thus much;

That the most holy, and the most regenerate that be in this world, have just cause to complaine of carnality still remaining in them, that as yet they are in some measure carnal: even the most holy have just cause continually to grone under the burden of the remainder of carnal corruption still abiding in them, and of carnal infirmities still cleaving to them, as Ignorance, Unbelief, Doubting,

Reason.

Use:  
Tryal of our  
knowledg and  
understanding  
of the Word  
of God.

Quest.

Answ.

Doctrine 3.  
The best of  
Gods children  
have just cause  
to complaine  
of carnality  
still abiding  
in them.



Hypocrisie, Pride, and the like : and we shall find, if we observe it, that the most holy and the most regenerate that have been in all ages, have ever thus complained, and thus groaned under the weight of corruption still abiding in them in part, and of carnal infirmities still remaining in them.

Thus did *Job*, *Job* 9. 30. 31. *If I wash my self with snow-water, and purge mine hands most clean, yet thou shalt plunge me in the pit, and mine own clothes shall make me filthy*; I have such corruption still abiding in me, and such filthinesse cleaving to me. And thus *David*, knowing the corruption of his heart, and sinful infirmities still cleaving to him, entreats the Lord not to enter into Judgment with him, *Psal.* 143. 2. *Enter not into judgment with thy servant : for in thy sight shall none that liveth be justified.*

We read of the father of the child, *Mar.* 9. 24. that though he had a measure of true faith, yet he complained of the weaknesse of his faith, and he cryed out with teares, and said, *Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.*

And thus the holy and blessed Martyrs of God, as *Bradford* and others, have much complained of their unbelief. *Bradford* almost in all his writings, and in every Meditation, complains of his unbelief; and yet he was a man exceedingly mortified to the world, and had received a rich and plentiful measure of grace. And thus in all ages the most holy and most regenerate have complained, and groaned under the burden of corruption still abiding in them, and of sinful infirmities still cleaving to them: And therefore certainly, the most holy and most regenerate that are, have just cause continually to groan under the burden of the remainder of sin which still abides in them, and of carnal infirmities that still cleave to them.

*Quest.*

Haply here some will say, The Lord is able at once clean to rid his children, and altogether to free them from the corruption of nature, and from all sinful infirmities. Why then doth the Lord suffer the relikes of corruption still to abide in them, and sinful infirmities still to cleave to them?

*Answ.*

I answer, The Lord is so pleased, for great and weighty causes: as, namely, for the beating down of their pride, lest they should too much lift up themselves; and for the exercise of their faith, their hope, their patience, and other graces of his Spirit, for the stirring of them up to fervent Prayer, for the manifestation of his own power in upholding them, and that they may be more mild and equal, pitiful and compassionate towards others, that they may bear with others, and may be moved to forgive and pity, and to comfort and strengthen others, as occasion is offered: For these causes the Lord is pleased to suffer the relikes of corruption still to abide in his children, and sinful infirmities still to cleave to them; and so, though men or women be most holy, yet they have just cause, continually to groan under the burden of the remainders of sin still abiding in them, and of sinful infirmities still cleaving to them.

*Use I.*  
That conceit  
of absolute  
perfection of  
holinesse in  
this life, mer-  
withal.

Now this Truth meets with that proud conceit of some, that dream of an absolute perfection of holinesse and regeneration in time of this life, as the *Papists*, the *Pelagians*, the *Familists*: they think that men may come to be absolutely perfect in holinesse and regeneration in this life, yea, some upstart *Novellers* and new-fangled *Divines* there be, who think, that where there is true Faith, there is no doubting at all; and where there is any the least doubting, there is no true Faith, and that men may come to be so free from sin, as they need not any more to mourn and weep for their sins. These be fancies and idle conceits, and they cannot stand with the Truth now delivered and grounded on the Word of God; the most holy, and the most regenerate have continually, so long as they be in this life, just cause to groan under the burden of the remainders of sin still abiding in them, and of sinful infirmities still cleaving to them, even to groane under the burden of Ignorance, Unbelief, Doubting, and such like.

*Object.*

Oh, but say they, where there is doubting, there can be no true comfort.

*Answ.*

I answer, It is utterly false. Where there is some doubting, there may be true



true comfort : yea, I dare boldly affirme on the contrary, that where there is no doubting at all, nor any ſtriving againſt unbeleife, there is no true comfort : for indeed there is no true faith, but a proud preſumption.

“ Again, the comfort of a true believer ſtands not in the absolute perfection of his faith, but in the ſoundneſſe and truth of it, and in true and ſound aſſurance of the pardon of his ſins, not in the absolute aſſurance of it : for indeed there is no ſuch aſſurance to be found in any : there is ſome weakneſſe and ſome doubting mingled with the aſſurance of faith in the beſt, and the beſt and moſt holy have juſt cauſe to bewail their unbeleife, and their doubting, and other ſinful infirmities cleaving unto them, ſo long as they are in this life : and therefore it is helliſh pride for any to think, that they may come to absolute perfection of holineſſe and regeneration in this life.

Again, is it ſo, that the moſt holy, and the moſt regenerate have juſt cauſe continually to grone under the burden of the remainders of corruption ſtill abiding in them, and of ſinfull infirmities ſtill cleaving to them ? Here is then a ground of comfort for thee, whoſoever thou art that art a child of God, and art ever complaining of thine own infirmities. Did *Paul* thus ? Did he break out and ſay he was *carnal*, having the remainder of ſin ſtill abiding in him, and ſinful infirmities ſtill cleaving to him ? And have the beſt of Gods children done thus ? and have they juſt cauſe thus to do ? Then do not thou too much caſt down thy ſelf, in regard of corruption ſtill abiding in thee, and ſinful infirmities ſtill cleaving to thee : thy caſe is not ſingular, but the caſe of all Gods children.

Oh, but thou wilt ſay, thou feeleſt thine own heart full of rebellion, full of unbeleife, full of doubting, and ſuch like, and thou haſt almoſt no feeling of grace and holineſſe in thee.

Well. aſſure thy ſelf, thou ſhalt not in this life feel holineſſe and grace, as thou feeleſt corruption and ſin. If therefore thou have the firſt fruits of the Spirit, an hatred of thine own corruption, a purpoſe to pleaſe God, and not to ſin againſt him in any thing, and a true fear of God in thine heart, comfort thy ſelf in that, and wait for full holineſſe in the life to come. It is a bleſſed thing that God gives thee a ſight of thine own corruption and ſinful infirmities, and an heart to be grieved for them. Thouſands in the world go lightly under the burden, not of ſinful infirmities, but of foul and groſſe ſins, and they laugh and are merry,

Laſt of all, have the moſt holy and the moſt regenerate, juſt cauſe continually to grone under the burden of the remainders of ſin ſtill abiding in them ? ſurely then it concerneth the beſt and the moſt holy that are, to be watchful, and continually to ſtand on their guard ; they have a Serpent lurking in their own bowels, and though he be wounded, yet he is not altogether dead, and he will ſting them, and poyſon them, if they watch him not narrowly : they are therefore to ſuſpect every thing that comes from themſelves, leſt it favour of the fleſh and of corruption ; and they are not eaſily to approve that which is pleaſing to their own ſence and reaſon ; for they having ſtill in them corruption of nature, through that corruption, the Devil is ſtill ready to wind himſelf into their hearts, and to mingle his poyſon with their thoughts : and therefore they are to watch over their own hearts continually.

Come we now to ſtand more particularly on that the *Apoſtle* here affirms of himſelf ; that he was *carnal*, ſold under ſin. And firſt, he ſaith, that he was *carnal* : namely, as we ſhewed, he was not ſimply and meerly carnal, as unregenerate perſons be, but he was carnal comparatively, and in ſome reſpects, as, namely, in reſpect of the perfect integrity, uprightneſſe, and ſpiritual nature of the Law of God, and in reſpect of perfect regeneration, he was even carnal, earthly and ſenſual. Hence two concluſions are offered to us. I will ſpeak of them in order ; as firſt, in that the *Apoſtle* ſaith, he was *carnal*, in reſpect of the perfect purity, uprightneſſe, and ſpiritual nature of the Law, we may take up this concluſion :

*Note.*

*Uſe 2.*

Comfort for ſuch as are ever complaining of their own infirmities

*Object.*

*Anſw.*

*Uſe 3.*

The beſt of Gods Children are continually to be watchful.

That



**Doct. 4:**  
The best of  
Gods children  
are carnal, in  
comparison of  
the Law of  
God.

That true believers, and such as are truly regenerate, though they be not simply and meerely carnal, as unregenerate persons be, yet they are carnal, in comparison of the Law of God. If the best, and most holy, and most regenerate in the world, compare themselves with the perfect holiness, integrity, and spirituality of the Law of God, they shall find, that in respect of that, they are carnal, yea, the more they compare themselves with the pure, holy, and perfect Law of God, the more vile, and the more filthy shall they see themselves; and the more vile and wretched shall they acknowledg themselves.

Thus it was with the holy Apostle in this place, he comparing himself with the pure, holy and spiritual Law of God, he breaks; out and saith, *I am carnal, and I am a vile sinful wretch.* And thus we may read of holy David *Psal. 19.* that David having in that Psalm largely discoursed of the excellency and perfection of the Law of God, and of the holiness, integrity and purity of it, and having said; *Vers. 11. that in keeping the Commandments of God, there is great reward:* he presently subjoynes, *Vers. 12. Who can understand his faults? Cleanse me from secret faults.* As if he had said, The Law of God is indeed most pure, and holy, and of excellent perfection: but (alas) if I and others, whosoever we be, compare our selves with the holy and perfect Law of God, we are far short of the holiness and perfection the Law of God requires at our hands, and we shall find our selves full of sin, and full of corruption, and the more we look into the holy and pure Law of God, and compare our selves with that, the more vile and filthy we see our selves, the more vile and wretched we must needs acknowledg our selves to be, and that we have such filthiness in us, that we cannot sound the depth and bottome of it. *Who can understand his faults?*

And hence it is that the Prophet *Isa. 64. 6.* saith, that the best righteousness of man is as filthy clouts, all our righteousness is as filthy clouts. The righteousness of such as are most holy, and most regenerate in this world, is as filthy clouts. And therefore, if the best and most holy that live in this world, compare themselves with the perfect holiness and purity of the Law of God, they shall find, that in respect of that, they are carnal, and the more they compare themselves with the pure, holy, and perfect Law of God, the more vile and filthy they shall see themselves, and the more vile and wretched they must needs acknowledg themselves: and the reasons of it are these:

**Reasons. 1.**

First, the holy and pure Law of God, is the perfect and right rule of all holiness and righteousness, and in the best and most regenerate in the world, there is some perverseness, and some crookedness still remaining, *Prov. 20. 9. None can say, I have cleansed my heart, I am pure, I am clean from my sin.*

Now then, the perverse and crooked heart of the best, being laid to the right rule of holiness, the crookedness of it must needs appear, the right rule of the Law will certainly discover it, and they shall thereby come more to see it, and more to acknowledg it.

**2.**

Again, the more such as be holy, and truly regenerate, lay their hearts to the Law of God, and to the Word of God, and compare themselves with that, the nearer they come to God himself: for by examination of their hearts by the Word of God, they draw neer to God; and the nearer they come to him, the more vile, and more filthy shall they see themselves, and be forced to acknowledge with *Abraham, Gen. 18. 27. Drawing neer to the Lord, they are but dust and ashes.* And say with *Job, Job 9. 20. If they would be perfect, yet the Lord shall judge them wicked.*

And therefore, doubtlesse, if the best and most holy that are in the world, compare themselves with the holiness, integrity, and spiritual nature of the Law of God, they shall find, that in that respect they are carnal, and the more they compare themselves with the pure and holy Law of God, the more vile and filthy shall they see themselves, and the more vile, and the more wretched must they needs acknowledge themselves.

First



First, Is it so, that the most holy that are in the world, if they be compared with the holy, and pure, and perfect Law of God, are carnal, and are vile; and filthy? What are then the unregenerate, and such as are yet in their natural state? and what are they then that are unholy, and prophane, and give themselves over to wickednesse and sin, even with greedinesse, and make but a mock of holinesse, and scoffe at those that are in any measure holy and religious? What shall we think that they are? Surely, we may justly think thus of them, that if they be compared with the Law of God, they will be found to be devilish, and limbs of the Devil. Are they that are most holy carnal? What then art thou that art a Drunkard, a Blasphemer, a Rayler, a Scoffer of Religion, and of all that are religious? Surely, if thou be compared with the holy Law of God, thou wilt be found not only carnal, but even a Devil incarnate: and if thou compare thy self with the holy Law of God, and have thine eyes open, to see what thou art, thou shalt find thy self as black as the Devil, and as hell it self. And if *Abraham* and holy men of God, drawing neer to the Lord, have cryed out, they were but *dust and ashes, vile, and sinful*; and, *rottenesse entred into their bones*, Habbak. 3. 16. and as *1 Pet. 4. 14. If the righteous scarcely be saved, where then wilt thou, that art a vile, wicked and ungodly sinner, appear?* When the Lord shall open thine eyes, and awaken thy conscience, to see thy vilenesse, thou shalt be forced to cry out, thou art a Devil, and a damned wretch and when the Lord shall appear to Judgment, thou shalt then call to the Mountains to fall on thee, and to the Hills to cover thee. Oh then, if hell have not taken full possession of thy soul, think of this in time.

Again, Is it so, that the most holy and most regenerate persons that are in this world, if they be compared with the holy and pure Law of God, they are carnal, and the more they compare themselves with the holy and pure Law of God, the more vile and filthy shall they see themselves, how then can any look to be justified in the sight of God, by his own inherent holinesse, by that holinesse that is found in himself? Is it possible, that a mans own inherent holinesse should justify him before the Judgement seat of the Lord? And yet it is not able to abide the tryal, according to the strict rule of the Law of God: and if it be examined by the pure and holy Law of God, it will be found in some measure carnal. Can that then justify a man before the Judgment seat of God? No, no: it is not possible. And it is but a fancy of the Papists, that true believers are first justified by the merit of Christ, but afterwards their second and further justification in the sight of God, is by their own inherent holinesse. This is a dotage.

And we may further drive the point to the just reproof of some amongst our selves, I mean ignorant persons. Aske an ignorant man or woman, one that cannot give the meaning of any Article of faith, or any Petition of the Lords Prayer, how he or she look to be saved? Their answer is commonly this, They do no body harme, they serve God, and they pray to God, and they hope to be saved by their good meaning and their good dealing, and serving of God. This is grosse and palpable ignorance: such persons deceive themselves exceedingly. Alas (as *David* saith. *Psalm. 130. 3.*) *If the Lord should mark iniquities, who shall stand?* The best and the most holy are not able to stand in his sight. And dost thou then think, that thy good meaning, and serving of God, shall go for currant before him? No, no, thou deceivest thy self: and, if thou rest on that, it will certainly deceive thee, and plunge thy soul into the gulf of hell: therefore take heed of it.

\* Last of all, this being so, that the most holy, and the most regenerate, if they compare themselves with the pure, holy, and perfect Law of God, shall find themselves carnal, and the more they compare themselves with it, the more vile and filthy shall they see themselves. By this we may easily see and discern, whence it is, that the papists so much dote on inherent holinesse, and that many amongst us are so highly conceived of their own holinesse, and good things in themselves;

## Use 1.

Unregenerate persons compared with the Law of God, are most vile and filthy.

## Use 2.

Justification in Gods sight by inherent holinesse, confuted.

## \* Use 3.

Whence it is that the Papists dote on inherent holinesse, and that many amongst us are highly conceited of their own holinesse & good things in themselves.



themselves; and that many please themselves in their civil honest carriage. why? Surely, all these, and the like, compare not themselves with the holy and pure Law of God, they compare themselves either with themselves, or with others amongst men, and they never examine themselves by the holy and pure Law of God: and that indeed is the ground of their carnal self-love, and self-liking. And therefore, when thou findest a swelling conceit in thee, in respect of some holiness or good thing in thy self, go to the Law of God, compare thy self with that, and thou shalt find thy best holiness, but carnality, in respect of the holiness of the Law of God, and of that which the Law of God requires at thy hands: and that will beat down thy swelling self-conceit.

Now in the second place, in that the Apostle saith, *he was carnal*, in respect of perfect regeneration; this conclusion is further offered:

*Doct. 5.*  
The best of  
Gods chil-  
dren are still  
carnal, in re-  
gard of per-  
fect regene-  
ration.

That the most holy, and the most regenerate that are in the world, are still carnal, in regard of perfect regeneration; the most holy have still carnality in them, and have still flesh and corruption abiding in them, yea, they are still in part carnal thoroughout, they are thoroughout partly flesh, and partly spirit; their minds, their wills, their affections, and all the powers of their souls, are thoroughout partly spirituall, and partly carnal: and therefore the Apostle saith, *1 Cor. 13. 9*, that *in time of this life, we know but in part*. As if he had said, We that are true believers, true Christians, yea, we that are Apostles, even we all and every one of us know but in part, and we are but in part enlightened, and consequently but in part sanctified thoroughout.

And *Gal. 5. vers. 17*. the Apostle speaking of the regenerate, he saith, there is still in them flesh and spirit, lusting one against the other, and fighting and striving one against the other. Therefore this is a certain truth, that the most holy, and most regenerate that live in this world, are still in part carnal, and that thoroughout; their minds, their wills, and all the powers of their souls, are thoroughout partly spiritual, and partly carnal.

*Use 1.*  
The best works  
of the regene-  
rate are im-  
perfectly good

This then first makes known to us, that the best works of the best and most regenerate that be in this world, are imperfect works, they are not perfectly good, but partly good, and partly evil and sinful. For why? Such as the cause is, such must needs be the effect. Now the mind and will of man are the cause of all his works, and the mind is partly carnal, and partly spiritual, and so is the will; and therefore the works that proceed from thence, must needs be answerable, even partly spiritual, and partly carnal and sinful, and so not able to justify any in the sight of God.

*Use 2.*  
The most holy  
that be in the  
world, have  
cause to be  
humbled for  
their best  
works.

Again, on the ground of doctrine now delivered, the best and most holy that be in the world, must learn to be humbled for their best works: they have cause to be humbled even for the best works they perform. Though we be truly regenerate, and have the spirit of grace and sanctification, yet when we have done any good thing; we have cause to be humbled for the carnality and sinfulness that cleaves to it: for we being in part carnal, our best works are in part carnal and are sinfully performed as they come from us, and therefore we have cause to be humbled for them; and it must be far from us (as the manner of the most is) to rest in the outward good work done; and to think we have done God high service, when we have done an outward good thing, when we have prayed, heard the Word of God, or the like. Indeed these are good things in themselves; but when we have prayed, we have cause to be humbled for our failing in Prayer; and when we have heard the Word of God, we have cause to be humbled for our sinfulness in hearing; and so in other things.

Come we now to the second thing the Apostle here affirms of him self, namely this, that he was sold under sin, that is, as we shewed, was held, though unwillingly, yet held he was as a captive under the power of his own corruption; Hence in the first place we are further given to understand thus much.

That



That though true believers and ſuch as are truly regenerate, are not altogether and wholly in thralldome and bondage to the corruption of nature, and ſlaves to it, as unregenerate perſons are, yet they are in ſome ſort under the power of it: the beſt, and the moſt holy, and moſt regenerate that are in the world, are in ſome thralldome and bondage to their own inbred corruption, it holds them, though they be in part unwilling, in ſome captivity, and it makes them ſometimes yeeld to the evil motions and luſts of it; and though they do not yeeld to it, as good ſubjects, do to their lawful Prince, willingly, yea ſometimes they do yeeld to it, as to a tyrant, unwillingly, and by the ſtrength of it they are ſometimes drawn to perform the luſts of the fleſh. And thus we ſhall find it hath been with the deareſt Saints of God in all ages, as with *Noah*, with *Lot*, with *Abraham*, *David*, *Peter*, and the reſt, though theſe were men truly regenerate, and men that had received a great meaſure of grace, yet ſometimes they were drawn by the ſtrength of their own corruption, to foul ſins, and did ſometimes yeeld, though unwillingly, to the evil motions and luſts of their own hearts. And to this purpoſe is that, *ſam* 5. 27. *Helias was a man ſubject to like paſſions as we are*. And hence it is, that the Apoſtle *Gal* 6. 1. puts it down indefinitely, and he ſaith, *If a man be fallen by occaſion into any fault*: or if a man, whoſoever he be, be over taken by any ſin. Thereby teaching us: that no man, be he never ſo good, or never ſo holy, is exempted from falling, or from being ſometimes over taken and ſupplanted by the ſtrength of his own corruption ſtill abiding in him in part.

And thus alſo ſpeaks *John*, 1 *Joh*. 2. 1. *My babes (ſaith he) theſe things I write I unto you, that you ſin not. And if any man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous*. As if he had ſaid, Theſe things I writ to you, my Babes, even you that are truly regenerate: I writ to them to this end, that ye ſhould be kept from ſin: but yet I know, that the beſt of us all are ſubject ſometimes to ſin, and we that are truly regenerate, are ſometimes drawn by the ſtrength of our own corruption, to fall into ſin: and if any of us do ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous.

Hence we may eaſily gather proof and confirmation of this truth, that the beſt, and the moſt holy, and moſt regenerate that are in the world, are in ſome thralldome and bondage to their own inbred corruption, and though they do not willingly yeeld to it, yet they are ſometimes by the ſtrength of it over-carried and over-mastered, and made to yeeld to the evil motions and luſts of it, and it doth ſometimes exerciſe a kind of power over them: and the reaſons of it are theſe:

First, it pleaſeth the Lord ſometimes a little to withdraw his hand from his children, I mean, his ſubſequent and following grace, that grace that ſtirres up, and ſtill moves the mind and will after they be regenerate: for there is not onely a preventing grace, but a ſubſequent grace needful to the regenerate. Now the Lord ſometimes is pleaſed to withdraw that following grace from them; and thereupon it is, that they are ſometimes over-carried, and made to yeeld to the evil motions and luſts of their own hearts.

Again, grace and ſanctification are not alwayes in the like exerciſe: grace in Gods children is ſometimes weak and faint, and lyes hid, and as it were dead, in reſpect of the exerciſe of it: and hereupon alſo it is, that they are ſometimes over-carried, and made to yeeld to the evil motions and luſts of their own hearts. And therefore this we may conclude as a certain truth, that the beſt, and the moſt holy, and moſt regenerate that are in the world, are in ſome thralldome and bondage to their own inbred corruption, and ſometimes it makes them by the ſtrength of it, (though they be in ſome ſort unwilling) to yeeld to the evil motions and luſts of it, and it doth ſometimes exerciſe a kind of power over them. And this being a cleer truth, for the uſe of it: firſt,

We are not to marvel, though the beſt and deareſt of Gods children do ſometimes ſlip and faile; and though ſometimes they be over-taken by ſome particular

*Doctrin* 6.  
The beſt of  
Gods children  
are in ſome  
thralldome  
and bondage  
to their own  
inbred cor-  
ruption.

*Reasons*. 1.

2.

*Uſe* 1.

lar



It is no mar-  
vel though  
Gods children  
doe sometimes  
slip and fail.

lar evil, we are not to judge hardly of them because of some particular failing. It is the manner indeed of the men of the world, to open their mouthes wide against Gods children, and hardly to censure them, and to judge them hypocrites, and to cry shame on them, and to say they are vile wretches, because sometimes they slip and fail, and are sometimes over-taken by some sin: it must be far from us thus to judge. If we thus judge the generation of Gods children, we sin, and we trespasse, as *David* saith, *Psal. 73. 15.*

The dearest Saints and Servants of God that live in the world, have still inbred corruption in part abiding in them; and though they be freed by the power of grace that is in them, from the full force and strength of it, and from a willing subjection to it, yet they are still in part in thraldome, and in bondage under it, and sometimes it over-carries them by the strength of it, and makes them sometimes yeeld to the evil motions and lusts of it, sometimes it strikes them, and wounds them, and gives them such a blow in such sort, as the prints and strokes of it are seen, and do openly appear, even to the view of the world; and therefore we are not to judge hardly of them, because of some slip and some fayling, and because sometimes they are over-taken by some sin. No: take this for a general and certain rule, we are not to judge any man to be good or bad by any one or few acts, but by his walking, and by the course of his life; if the course of his life be carnal, earthly, and sensual, certainly then he is a carnal man, and we may so judge him. If the course of his life be holy, and such as it ought to be, then doubtlesse he is holy, and his state is good, and we may so judge of him, though sometimes he fail, and be sometimes over-taken by some sin.

*Vs. 2.*

A ground of  
contentation,  
and willing  
subjection of  
our selves to  
the hand of  
God in all  
troubles.

Again, is it so, that the best, and most holy, and most regenerate are still in some thraldome and bondage under their own inbred corruption, and their own corruption doth sometimes exercise a kind of power over them, and over-carry them, and make them yeeld to the evil motions and lusts of it? The consideration of this may serve to work in all Gods children, contentation of mind, and a willing subjection of themselves to the hand of God, in all their troubles and afflictions that befall them in this life, whatsoever they be: for why? though thou beest a child of God, and dear and pretious in the sight of God, yet withall consider, that thou art still in part under the power of sin, and thou art still in some sort a slave of sin, and thine own corruption doth sometimes over-carry thee, and draw thee from that obedience thou owest to thy God and gracious Father, and makes thee sometimes sin against him, and provoke him to anger against thee; and if then the Lord lay on thee sicknesse, poverty, reproach, banishment, or any other affliction; alas, it is far short of that thou hast deserved; thou by thy sin hast deserved death and damnation.

And if thou duly consider this, it will make thee willingly and contentedly to bear any affliction the Lord lays on thee, and to say with thy self when thou art under the afflicting hand of God; Vile wretch that I am, I find my self, that I am still a slave under sin, and that I have been over-carried by the strength of mine own corruption, to yeeld to the lusts and motions of it, and to sin against my good God and gracious Father, and I am worthy of death and damnation, and it were just with him to throw me to hell for my sins, and it is his mercy that I am not thrown to hell, shall I then think this sicknesse, this poverty, this reproch, and the like, grievous, or long and tedious to me? No, no: I will bear it with patience, with willingnesse, and with contentation; Oh, I have deserved far more at the hands of my God, this is nothing to that I have deserved. Thus it will be with thee, if thou duly consider that thou art still a slave under sin, and sometimes over-carried by the strength of thine own corruption, to sin against thy God.

Let then all Gods children, feeling the hand of God on them, call this to their minds, that they are still in part slaves to sin, and it will work in them  
in



in some measure, contentation of mind, and a willing subjection of themselves to the hand of the Lord in all their troubles and distresses.

Lastly, this being so, that the best, the most holy, and most regenerate, are still in some thralldome under their inbred corruption, this may serve to cheer up Gods children, in respect of their particular failings against their purpose. When they are sometimes over-carried by the strength of their own corruption, to do evil against their purpose, they are indeed then to be humbled, and not thereupon to be utterly dejected, and to call their state in doubt and question. No, no; they have still corruption in part abiding in them, and they are still in some thralldome and bondage under it, and sometimes it will over-carry them, and make them yeeld to the evil motions and lusts of it; and in this respect, they are to labour for liberty, and to groan for deliverance out of their captivity; and this should sharpen their desire after heaven, because here they cannot go on in a course of holiness with free spirits, but they are sometimes over-carried and drawn aside; yet this should not utterly daunt them, and utterly cast them down.

Further observe we, that the *Apostle* he saith, that *he was sold under sin*. He saith not, that he sold himself to sin, as it is said of *Ahab*, 1 *King*. 21. 25. that *he sold himself to work wickednesse in the sight of the Lord*: but *he was sold under sin*: thereby implying an unwillingnesse in himself to be held under the power of sin; and that howsoever his own inbred corruption did exercise a kind of power over him, and sometimes over-carry him, yet he was not willing to be under that power, he would fain have been out of that thralldome, and he did not willingly yeeld to the command of such a master. Hence we may gather,

A manifest difference between the regenerate and the unregenerate, in respect of the power of their inbred corruption: the regenerate are sold under the corruption of their hearts, they are held in some sort under the power of it unwillingly, and they are, as it were, haled and drawn by the force and strength of it, unwillingly to sin: But the other, the unregenerate, they sell themselves to their own inbred corruption, and they willingly yeeld to it, and with pleasure they follow the evil motions and lusts that arise from their own corruption; yea, in falling into one and the same sin, there is this difference between the regenerate and the unregenerate: The regenerate, they fall into it unwillingly, against their purpose, and with a striving against it; but the unregenerate, they fall into it purposely, and with full consent of will, and it is as meat and drink to them, to fulfil the lusts of their own hearts. *Prov.* 10. 23. *It is a pastime to a fool to do wickedly*. And *Ephes.* 2. 2, 3. the *Apostle* describing the natural state of the *Ephesians*, saith, *They walked in sin*: and he shewes how, namely, according to the course of this world, and after the Prince that ruleth in the ayre, even the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom we also had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, in fulfilling the will of the flesh, and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath. And thus *Jude Epist.* vers. 18. speaks of the unregenerate persons, that *they walk after their own ungodly lusts*: They are willingly led by them. And to these we might adde many other testimonies of Scripture, shewing a manifest difference between the regenerate and the unregenerate, in respect of the power of their own corruption.

And this serves to strip ungodly men and women of their common shift: they use to defend, or to excuse, and to extenuate their sins; as first, an ungodly man or woman, a common Drunkard, a filthy Fornicator, and such like, plead their infirmity. Alas, it is not so, the regenerate only sin of infirmity, and they only are haled and drawn to sin, against their purpose; but the unregenerate sin with all their hearts, with pleasure.

Again, an ungodly man or woman, being convinced of sin, and justly reprov'd, as for Swearing, or the like; what is their shift? Oh, say they, I pray you, what are you that reprove us? will not you swear? you will do worse, I warrant you; and have you no sinne? and are you without faults? Poor soules!

Use. 3.

A ground of comfort to Gods children in regard of their particular failings against their purpose.

Doct. 4.

The difference between the regenerate and unregenerate, in respect of the power of inbred corruption.

Use 1.

Ungodly mens excuse, and extenuation of their sins taken away.

Use 2.

Another shift of ungodly persons removed;



the best are not without faults ; but it is one thing to sinne of frailty, and another, to sin wittingly, and willingly, and to hold on a course in sin ; as it is one thing, of weaknesse to fall into the mire, and another thing, to walk in it purposely, or to tumble in it after the manner of Swine. And it is one thing, to be sold under sin, and to be held under the power of it unwillingly, and sometimes to be over-carried by it : and another thing, to sell a mans self to sinne, and to follow the lusts of his own heart, with pleasure and much delight. If thou find thy self in that case, certainly thou art unregenerate.

## VERS. 15, 16, 17.

*For I allow not that which I do : for what I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that do I.*

*If I do then that which I would not, I consent to the Law that it is good.*

*Now then, it is no more I that do it, but the sin that dwelleth in me.*



Our *Apostle* now comes to lay forth the combat between the Flesh and the Spirit, in them that are truly regenerate, giving instance of it in his own particular, insisting in his own example.

In these three Verses, 15, 16, 17. he layes before us the first degree of that combat, as that by sinne he was brought to do that evil he would not ; thereby making known an opposition between the Law of God commanding, and his will consenting, and sin over-ruling, and his flesh obeying. That is the summe of them.

Now the *Apostle* having said in the Verse before, that he was sold under sin, that he was held under the power of his own corruption unwillingly ; in the first words of the fifteenth Verse he proves it by this, that he disallowed that which he did : thus he reasons. The things he did, he did not allow ; and therefore he was held under the power of sin unwillingly : *I am sold under sin* : for (saith he) *I allow not that which I do*. Then he further confirms that Proposition, that he allowed not that which he did ; because his will was to do that which he did not, and that which he did, was hateful unto him, and he did it with a loathing and detestation : for (saith he) *what I would, that do I not ; but what I hate, that do I*. And hereupon he infers two conclusions : one in the 16. Verse, and the other in the 17. Verse.

## VERS. 15.

*For I allow not that which I do : for what I would, that do I not : but what I hate, that do I.*

**T**He *Apostle* here still speaks of himself, and that in the time present, *I allow not that which I do, and what I would, that do I not ; but what I hate, that do I*. And so, to the end of the Chapter : giving us to understand, that he spake these things of himself, as he was now in the state of regeneration : and the very things that in this discourse the *Apostle* affirms of himself, do plainly prove as much : for he saith, he willed the good, and hated the evil : he consented to the Law, he delighted in the Law, he felt in himself a striving between the Law in his members, and the Law of his mind, he was led captive to the Law of sin, he groaned under his misery, in respect of the power of his corruption, he desired deliverance from it, and he acknowledged and magnified the grace of God in and through Christ. All which are proper to the regenerate, and are never found in any that are yet in their natural state and condition.

The objections that are brought to the contrary, we will answer in handling the



the particulars. But this we are to take for a certain truth, that the *Apostle* in this whole Context, speaks of himself as he was now regenerate, and in his own person makes known, how it is with all that are truly regenerate. And here he saith, *I allow not*. The word here rendred (*allow*) properly signifies *know* (*I know not*) but the word (*know*) is sometimes in Scripture put to signifie, acknowledge, approve, allow, &c. as *Psal. 1. 6. The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous*; that is, he acknowledgeth, he approveth, he liketh their way. So *Matth. 7. 23. I never knew you*; that is, I never acknowledged you for mine. And so the meaning of the *Apostle* in this place is this, *I approve not, I like not, it is not pleasing unto me, it is in some sort against my mind and my heart, (That which I do) or that which I work*: for the word is the same we had, *Vers. 8. and 13.* and it is to be understood of the sinful thoughts and motions of the *Apostles* mind, will, and affections; likewise of his sinful words and actions: and his meaning is this, *That evil which I act and do inwardly in my mind, my will, and my affections, and outwardly in my words and actions. For what I would*; that is, What good I would think, affect, speak, and do, that good I do not think, speak or do; but what I hate, that is, the evil that I lothe and abhor, and is hateful unto me, that I do, that I act, and do in my mind, will and affections, and in my words and actions.

Interpretation

Yet this must not so be understood, that the *Apostle* was compelled to evil, but that he consented not to it with his whole will, he being now regenerate; as he was regenerate, he hated evil, and the evil he did, he did it with a loathing. Thus then briefly conceive we the *Apostles* meaning in this Verse, as if he had said,

*For the evil which I act and do inwardly in my mind, will, and affections, and outwardly in my words and actions, I approve not, it is not pleasing to me, I like it not, nay, it is against my mind and my heart: for the good I would think, will, and affect, speak and do, I do not think, will affect, speak, nor do: but the evil that I lothe and abhor, and is hateful to me, in part, as I am regenerate, (for as I am regenerate, I hate evil in part) even that evil that I act and do in my mind, will, and affections, and in my words and actions.*

First, here observe we the reason the *Apostle* useth to prove that he was sold under sin, that he was held under the power of sin unwillingly: how proves he that? Surely thus; that he did not allow nor approve of the evil he did, either inward or outward; though he did evil sometimes, yet it was not pleasing to him, it was in some sort against his heart and mind: and by this he proves, that he was sold under sin. Hence then note we in a word,

Doctrine 1.

How men may know whether they be hold under sin, or sell themselves to it: whether men be slaves to sin willingly or unwillingly, by their allowance or their disallowance of the evil they do, they may certainly know it. Dost thou find, that the evil thou dost is displeasing to thee, thou dost not allow it, nor approve it in thine heart, but rather thine heart riseth against it, and cannot away with it? thereupon thou maist conclude, that though in some sort thou art in bondage to thine own corruption, yet it is unwillingly, and thou art not a slave to sin willingly. On the other side, if thou find that the evil thou dost, is pleasing to thee, and thine heart likes it, and approves it, and thine heart is tickled and affected with pleasure in doing of it, as it is, *Prov. 2. 14. Thou rejoicest in doing evil*: Out of all question thou art then a slave and a drudge to sin willingly, thou art a slave to the lusts of thine own heart, and thou wilt be so, it is pleasing to thee: and so thou art in a miserable slavery, *Thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, Act. 8. 23.* Hereby then let every one try himself.

By the allowance or disallowance of evil, men may know whether they be slaves to sin willingly or unwillingly.

Use.

Tryal of our selves.

Now consider we the Proposition it self. *I allow not that which I do*; that evil I do, I allow not; I approve not, it is not pleasing unto me. Hence we are given to understand thus much:

That true believers, such as are truly regenerate, do evil sometimes, and they sometimes sin in their thoughts and affections, and in their words and actions;

Doctrine 2.



Though true Believers do sometimes sin, yet they allow not the evil they do.

ons; yet they allow not the evil they do, they approve it not, it is not pleasing to them, but their hearts rise up against it, and they are displeased with it: though true believers, and such as are truly regenerate, be sometimes overcarried by violence of temptation, or by force and strength of their own corruption still in part remaining in them, to do evil and to sin, yet their hearts approve not of that evil and sin, but they find that their hearts do rise up against that evil, and check them in the doing of it, and when it is done, their hearts are not quiet, but they do then smite them, and stirre them up to recover themselves by speedy repentance; their hearts do not allow them to lye in that evil and sin, and to go on in it with pleasure.

We read, that thus it was with *David*, when he had numbred the people, *2 Sam. 24. 10.* the text saith, that *his heart smote him*; And *Psal. 66. 18, 19.* saith *David*, *If I regard wickednesse in mine heart, the Lord will not hear me. But God hath heard me, and considered the voyce of my prayer.* Thereby implying, that howsoever he was sometimes overtaken with evil and sin, yet he did not regard it in his heart, his heart did not approve it, it was not pleasing unto him. And thus it is with all Gods children, and such as are truly regenerate; And the reason of it is this:

Reason.

True believers, and such as are truly regenerate, they have in them the Spirit of grace and sanctification, and the work of that Spirit in them is entire; I mean, it renews them throughout in all the powers of their souls; it makes not onely their conscience to check them for sin, and their judgment to dislike it, which may in some sort be found in the reprobate, but it makes their hearts also to dislike it, and as it is, *Isai. 30. 21.* *It makes their ears hear a word behind them:* and when they turn to the right hand or to the left, it makes their hearts tell them they are wrong, as it is, *Joh. 16. 8.* *The Spirit rebukes them for their evil thoughts and desires.* And therefore, though sometimes they be overcarried by violence of temptation, or strength of corruption, to do evil and to sinne, yet their hearts approve not of that evil, but do rise up against it, and check them in the doing of it, and when it is done, they allow it not either in the doing or afterward.

Use 1.  
The sins of the regenerate, are sins of a mixt kind.

Now then this being a truth, it makes known to us, that the sins of the regenerate are sins of a mixt kind, they are partly from the will, and partly against it; for the regenerate are sometimes over-carried by strength of corruption to do evil, and yet their hearts renewed by grace, disallow that evil, and they are divided in the doing of that evil, and in all their evils and sinnes there is some striving in their wills against them, and so they are mixt sins, partly from the will, and partly against it.

Use 2.  
A note, by which men may know whether they be regenerate or no.

Again, is it so, that though true believers, and such as are truly regenerate, be sometimes over-carried by the violence of temptation, or strength of corruption to do evil and sin, yet their hearts approve not of that evil, but do rise up against it? Here is then one special note, by which men may know whether they be truly regenerate or no. Wouldst thou know whether thou be truly regenerate or no? Examine thy self by this. Dost thou find that the known evil thou dost, is displeasing to thee, and thine heart riseth against it both in the doing of it and afterward, and not only thy conscience checks thee for that evil, and thy judgment dislikes it, (for that may be, and is sometimes found in the reprobate) but thine heart disallows it, and is displeased with it? Certainly, then thou mayst conclude to thy comfort, that thou art truly regenerate, and that thou art freed by grace from the full force of thine own corruption. Haply thou wilt say, How shall I know that I differ from the reprobate in dislike of sin, and that not only my conscience checks me for the evil I do, and my judgment dislikes it, but that my heart disallows it?

Quest.

How shall I be sure of that?

Ans.

I answer thee, By this thou shalt know it, and be sure of it, if thou find in thine heart a true dislike of that sin which thine heart hath before loved and liked,



ked, and was most inclined to. When thine heart is thus carried against its own liking, certainly, then there is true grace in thine heart, and there is a striving between grace and corruption: for it must needs be a supernatural power and work of grace, that makes a man or woman dislike that which nature most liketh. And hereby try thy self; on the other side, if thou find that thou dost allow of the least known evil done by thee, and howsoever thy conscience checks thee for it, yet thou likest it well enough in thine heart, thou lovest it, and couldst find in thine heart to continue in it for ever, and thou usest means to stifle thy conscience, that it shall not check thee for it, and being convinced of that sin, and reproved for it, thou pleadest for it, and thou labourest to excuse it, and to extenuate it, yea, being now past the practice of it, thou delightest in the remembrance of it; deceive not thy self, certainly, thou art yet in the dregs of nature, and thou art yet unregenerate, and thou canst find no comfort in thy state: no, no, remember those words of David before mentioned, *If I regard wickednesse in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* If thou regard wickednesse in thine heart, and approve of it either in thy self or others, thy case is not good, the Lord will not hear thee, thy prayers and all thy services to God are abominable.

The Papists from these words of the *Apostle*, *I allow not that which I do*, conclude, that sudden involuntary motions, motions to evil, that arise from the flesh and inferiour parts of the soul (as they call them) and gain not the consent of will, are no sins. This is but a fancy. I shewed heretofore the weakness of this conceit, *Vers. 7.* and made known, that concupiscence, and the very first motions to evil, that arise from the corruption of nature, though they gain not consent of will, and though they be repelled and rejected, yet they are sins forbidden in the tenth Commandement: and this very Text confutes this conceit: for the *Apostle* saith not only thus, that *he did not allow that which he did, but he hated it*, it was odious and hateful to him as he was regenerate; and doubtlesse it was odious and hateful to him, because it was evil and sinful, yea, evil and sinful in it self, though he had never done it; and his doing of it unwillingly, did not take away the nature of it, and make it cease to be evil: no, no; it was evil in it self, and so, odious and hateful to the *Apostle*. I passe from that Popish conceit and fancy.

A Popish conceit confuted.

Come we to the confirmation of this Proposition, that the *Apostle* did not allow the evil that he did, in these words, *for what I would, that I do not: but what I hate, that do I.* And in that the *Apostle* confirms it, that he did not allow the evil he did, because his will was to do good, which he did not, and the evil he did, was hateful to him: Hence we might stand to shew,

That men may know they allow not the evil they do, when they would do good, and they do it not, and they allow not the evil they do, they are hindered from doing good unwillingly, and the evil they do, is hateful to them: but of that we have partly spoken before, and therefore I passe by it.

Now from these words of the *Apostle*, (*What I would, that do I not: but what I would not, that do I:*) we may gather this Conclusion,

That true Believers, and such as are truly regenerate, are not only hindered from doing good unwillingly, but they do the evil they hate, they are sometimes drawn by the strength of their own corruption still in part abiding in them, to do that evil that is hateful to them, even that evil they do in part lothe and abhor, they are sometimes over-carried to the doing of it. The *Apostle* here affirms thus much of himself; and this may be further exemplified, and made cleer by the example of many other holy servants of God. We read that <sup>a</sup> *Noah* <sup>a</sup> *Gen. 6.9.* *was a just and upright man, and he walked with God,* And the Holy Ghost gives this testimony of him, <sup>b</sup> *that he being moved with reverence, prepared the Ark to the saving of his household.* He was a man truly fearing God, and a dear child of God, and doubtlesse, he hated all manner of sins, and especially foul and grosse sins. And yet we read, <sup>c</sup> *that for want of watchfulness, this holy man of God* <sup>c</sup> *Gen. 9.21.*

Doctrine 3:

True believers sometimes do that evil that is hateful to them.

<sup>a</sup> *Gen. 6.9.*

<sup>b</sup> *Heb. 11.7.*

<sup>c</sup> *Gen. 9.21.*



d 2 Pet. 2. 7, 8.

e Gen. 19. 33,  
35.

Quest.

was overtaken with a foul sin, even with the sin of drunkenness. Likewise we read of *Lot*, that *he was a just man*, a dear child of God: yea, the *Apostle* witnesseth of him, <sup>d</sup> that *he being just, was vexed with the filthy and unclean conversation of the Sodomites*, and being righteous, and dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds. So that without question, his soul hated the sin of uncleanness: and yet we read <sup>e</sup> the latter end of the Chapter, he was overtaken with that sin that was hateful to him, even with the sin of uncleanness, and that with his own daughters. And to these we might adde many other examples of the dear Saints and Servants of God, that have been sometimes over-carried by the strength of their own corruption, to do the evil that was hateful to them, and which they did in part lothe and abhor. But here haply the question will be moved, and I hold it needful to answer it.

How far one that is truly regenerate, and a child of God, may yeeld to the lust of his own heart, and be drawn by the strength of his own corruption to do evil, even to do evil, he hating evil, and he lothing and abhorring it in some part: as he is regenerate? For answer to this, we must know there be certain degrees of yeelding to the evil lusts of the heart; certain degrees, I say, there be, by which men yeeld to the lusts of their own hearts, and are over-carried by them to the doing of evil. There is a delight in them, consent to them, and there's the act, and perseverance in the act. Now delight in evil motions, or motions to evil that arise in the heart, may be found in a child of God, and in one that is truly regenerate; he may be pleased, and he may be delighted with the evil motions of his heart; but consent to them is not usually and ordinarily found in a child of God; sometimes it is: and if at any time a child of God do consent to the lusts of his own heart, it is but in part, and against his purpose, because he is over-carried by the strength of them; and again, the act or execution of lust is not ordinarily found in a child of God: if at any time he do act and execute the lust of his heart, and do fall, he may say as the *Apostle* doth in this place, *I do that I hate*: but for perseverance in the act of evil, and holding on in a course in doing evil with pleasure, that cannot befall a child of God: for he hath the seed of grace in him, and that stirres him up to recover himself by new repentance. Again, we must know that a child of God, and one that is truly regenerate, may be drawn by the strength of his own corruption to do evil, yea, some foul and grosse particular evil, not generally to do evil, but some particular evil, being suddenly surprised by violence of temptation, and the strength of his own corruption. This was the case of *Noah*, of *Lot*, of *David*, of *Peter*, in those particular foul sins they fell into.

Answ.

Thus then I briefly answer to the question propounded: That a child of God, and one that is truly regenerate, may so far yeeld to the lusts of his own heart, as he may delight in them, yea, he may consent to them, though not ordinarily, nor wholly, but at some times, and then only in part: and he may sometimes, not ordinarily, but sometimes, he may proceed to the act and execution of lust; yet so, as he may truly say he hates the evil he doth, yea, sometimes being on a sudden surprised by violence of temptation, and the strength of his own corruption, he may fall into some foul and grosse particular evil and sin; but to persevere in the act of evil, and to hold on a course in doing evil with pleasure, that is never found in any child of God and one that is truly regenerate. And thus we see this truth confirmed and cleared, that true believers and such as are truly regenerate, are sometimes drawn by the strength of their own corruption, still in part abiding in them, to do that evil that is hateful to them, even that evil they in part lothe and abhor, they are sometimes over-carried to the doing of it.

Use.

Comfort to  
Gods children  
in respect of  
their falling  
into some sin.

And this being a truth, the use of it is for comfort; it serves as a ground of comfort to Gods children, in respect of their falling sometimes into some sinne. Dost thou find, thou that art a child of God, that thou art sometimes drawn  
by



by the ſtrength of thine own corruption ſtill in part abiding in thee, to do that evil that is hateful unto thee? Art thou ſometimes over-carried to do that evil thou doſt in part lothe and abhor? It is no otherwiſe with thee then it was with the holy *Apoſtle Paul*; he did the evil he hated: and it is no otherwiſe with thee, then with other of the deareſt Saints and Servants of God. Thus it hath been with them, and thus it is with true believers, and ſuch as are truly regenerate, they are ſometimes drawn by the ſtrength of their own corruption, to do that evil that is hateful unto them; and look that the evil that thou art ſometimes drawn to do, be odious in thy ſight and hateful to thee, and howſoever thou art over-carried to the doing of it, yet thou doſt in part lothe and abhor it, and then though thou have cauſe to be humbled, yet thou haſt no cauſe to be utterly diſcouraged and clean out of heart; no, though the evil thou haſt been over-carried to the doing of, be a foul and groſſe evil and ſin, thou art yet in no worſe caſe then the deareſt of Gods children have been in, or may be in. Indeed, thou profeſſing thy ſelf a ſervant of God, it is thy part to labour by all good means to keep thy ſelf free, as from the leaſt and moſt ſecret ſin, ſo eſpecially from open and groſſe ſins by which God is much diſhonored, his ſpirit grieved, thine own conſcience wounded, the godly offended, and the mouthes of Atheiſts and wicked perſons opened to blaſpheme the truth of God. But I ſpeak this for thy comfort, when notwithstanding thy watchfulneſſe, and notwithstanding thy care to keep thy ſelf from ſin thou art ſometimes over carried to the doing of that evil that is hateful unto thee, and which thou doſt in ſome part lothe and abhor, thou art not then to be utterly dejected and utterly caſt down.

But thou wilt ſay, thou addeſt one fall to another, and thou ſinneſt time after time, even againſt thine own conſcience, and therefore thou art a fraid, and thou thinkeſt thou haſt juſt cauſe ſo to be, that thy faith is nothing but meer hypocriſie, or ſome light ſhadow of faith, and ſuch as may be found in the Reprobate. This is a ſhrewd objection, and this troubles and brangles the conſcience of many a weak Chriſtian.

But to help the poor ſoul out of the bryars in this caſe, deal truly with thy ſelf: doſt thou find that thou art buffeted with ſin in this manner, that thou addeſt one to another? yet doeſt thou not find many graces of Gods Spirit in thy ſoul, a love to God, a love to his Word, and to his Children? Art thou not able to ſay, and that truly, that thy life is not defiled with many foul and groſſe ſins, and that thou doſt not alwayes give way to thy ſin that troubles thee? Sometimes thou art enabled by grace to withſtand it, and when thou giv'eſt place to it, it is not of any obſtinate willfulneſſe, but of frailty and weakneſſe, not of ſet purpoſe, but againſt thy will and flat reſolution, thou having often reſolved with thy ſelf, never to fall into that ſin again: and doſt thou not even hate and lothe that ſin, and uſe all good means poſſible to be freed from it, as continual hearing, reading and meditating on the Word of God, Prayer, avoyding all occaſions that might draw thee on that ſin? Is it not thus with thee? Thou wilt ſay, Yes, thus it is with me indeed. Why then, comfort thy ſelf; thou maieſt hereupon certainly conclude to thy comfort, that thou haſt true faith, and thy faith is a true working faith; it works in thee that love to God, and that love to his Children, and that hatred of that evil thou doſt; and therefore comfort thy ſelf, thou haſt true faith, and thou haſt no cauſe to call thy ſtate into queſtion: no, no aſſuredly thou ſhalt in time be able to ſtop the mouth of Satan, and to wring from him this weapon by which he wounds thy poor ſoul, thy often falling into the ſame ſin, and by the mercy of God, and through his grace, thou ſhalt one day be fully freed from that evil that is ſo hateful to thee; for the Lord hath begun in thee the work of grace, and he will certainly finiſh it, *Phil. 1.6. His gifts of grace are without repentance, Rom. 11.29.* And let that cheer up thine heart.

Now in that the Apoſtle ſaith, *He willed good, and he hated evil, we made*  
this

Queſt.

Anſw.



this a note of his regeneration, that therefore he was certainly regenerate; this being proper to the regenerate, and never found in any but such as are truly regenerate. But against this lyes an objection: I will briefly propound and answer it.

*Object.*

Thus some object against it: say they, Even the unregenerate will that which is good: for all men naturally desire that that is good and right: Reason inclines to good. The Heathen Philosopher could say, ὁ λόγος πρὸς τὰ βέλτιστα παρακάλει: and unregenerate persons in some sort hate evil. Judas cryed out, *Matth. 27. 4. I have sinned, and have done evil, betraying the innocent blood.* And therefore this is not proper to the regenerate, to will good, and to hate evil.

*Ans.*

To this I answer thus; There is a threefold good: First, there is a natural good, which all things desire; and this is not the object of reason or of the will, but of the natural appetite, which in it self makes men neither good nor bad.

Secondly, there is a moral good, which howsoever the light of reason being in the full strength of it, may yeeld to, in them that be unregenerate, and may make them sometimes to do it; yet as that good comes from them, and as it is done by them, it is not truly good, nay, it is sin to them, being not done in obedience to Gods Commandement, and of faith, and to the glory of God.

Thirdly, there is spiritual good, which is heavenly and spiritual, which is of the Spirit and of Faith: now that good unregenerate persons cannot will, it is not possible they should will it; for they have no knowledge nor understanding of it: and this is that good, the Apostle here said he willed, and would have done:

A true note of regeneration.

Again, unregenerate persons in some sort hate evil. It is true: but how? Surely, onely for fear of punishment, or in some other sinister and by-respect, and not because it is evil, and sinful, and displeasing to God, and to the dishonour of God. No, no: they hate not evil in any such respect: and so it remains a true note of the Apostles regeneration, that he willed good, and hated evil: and it is a true note to others, that they are also regenerate, if they find in themselves that they will that which is spiritually good, even that good which is of the Spirit and of Faith, and that they hate evil, not in a sinister and by-respect, but because it is evil, and displeasing to God, and is to the dishonour of God: and, if they were put to their choyce, they would rather dye the most cruel death, then wittingly and willingly do evil, and sin against God. That is a true note of regeneration.

*Doff. 4.*  
Sin must be odious and hateful to true believers.

Now further, in that the Apostle saith, *What I hate, that I do*: meaning, that the evil he did, was odious and hateful to him. Whence we may easily conclude thus much, that sin must be odious and hateful to us, even to such as would approve themselves to be true believers, Gods children, and truly regenerate: they must find this in themselves, that they hate and lothe evil, yea, all manner of evil and sin, all known sins whatsoever, and that they abstain from evil and sin, out of a loathing and a detestation of it. It is not enough for us to abstain from this or that evil and sin, for that a man or woman may do, as being not prone to it, or being not tempted to it, or by custome, or for fear of danger of Law, or shame of the world and such like; but we must abstain from every known evil and sin, out of an hatred and detestation of it: we must hate, detest, and abhor every known evil and sin. And to this purpose David speaks plainly, *Psal. 119. 104. I hate all the wayes of falsehood.* And *Vers. 128: I esteeme all thy precepts most just, and hate all false wayes: I do not onely disclaim false wayes and keep my self from walking in them, but I hate and abhor them, they are odious and hateful unto me.* *Psal. 97. 10. saith the Psalmist, Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.*

And thus the Lord exhorts by his Prophet, *Amos. 5. 15. Hate the evil, and love the good.* It is the exhortation of *Jude, Jude Epist. vers. 23. That we should*



*should hate the very garment spotted by the flesh.* Rom. 12.9. saith the Apostle. *Abhor that which is evil.* The original word there used, is very emphatical, it signifies to hate with extreme hatred, and to detest with an utter detestation, even as we hate and detest hell it self. These places, not to add any further testimony, do sufficiently cleer and confirme the point, that sin must be odious and hateful to us. If we would approve our selves true believers, we must hate and lothe all manner of evil, even all known sins whatsoever, and we must abstain from evil and sin, out of an utter lothing and detestation of it: for why?

Sin is odious, hateful, and abominable in the sight of God, it is displeasing to God, it stirres up his anger, it defaceth the Image of God, and brings in the image of Satan, and it is most foul and ugly in Gods sight; and being thus odious and abominable in the sight of God, it must be so to us, it must be so to all Gods children.

Again, the Lord not only dislikes sin and iniquity, but he hates it, and abhors it, *Prov. 6:16. These six things doth the Lord hate, yea his soul abhorreth seven.* Yea, it is worth our marking, which follows *vers. 17. 18.* That the Lord hates not onely sin, but even the member that is made the instrument of sin. So far doth the Lord hate and abhor sin. And Gods children must be like to God their Father. Sin is odious to God their Father: and it must be so to them, they must hate, lothe and abhor all manner of evil, if they will prove themselves indeed to be the true children of God, and not bastards.

Now then this being a cleer truth, it follows on it, that it is not inough for men to have in them some little dislike of sin, and it must be far from men to be indifferent in respect of sin; that indifferency, in respect of sin, is justly on the ground of doctrine now delivered, to be taxed. Many there be in the world that are indifferent in respect of sin. Are there not many that can commend Papists and Atheists, and stick not sometimes to say of the Papists, Why, I hope they be good honest men, though they be a little carried aside to Idolatry and Superstition: and of Atheists, There is no such hurt in them, they are worst to themselves, though they be not so strict as others are? yea, be there not some, that care not to joyne fellowship with Papists, that can walk, and talk, and converse with them familiarly; and some that when a course is taken on just cause to take papists at their Idolatrous meetings, stick not to say, Oh, you are strict against them: but it were more meet, you should rather look to others that have their private meetings, to Puritane meetings, those they cannot abide; they rather like of Popish meetings, and of drunken meetings; though men sit guzzeling in Ale houses or Taverns whole dayes and nights, they take no notice of those meetings; but these Puritane meetings they cannot abide, and so I might insist in other particulars.

Well, consider it, whosoever thou art: Dost thou, that canst commend Papists, that are utter enemies to Gods grace and glory, and thou that canst speak well of Atheists and prophane persons, dost thou hate sin? dost thou abhor it? No, no: there is no such matter, thou art an indifferent man, and thou hast not in thee that lothing and detestation of sin, that ought to be in a true believer; and take this with thee, thou art odious and hateful to God. Mark what the Lord Jesus threatens, *Revel. 3. 16. Such as be luke-warme, indifferent persons, it will come to passe, that he will spue them out of his mouth:* they are as lothsome as luke-warm water to a mans stomach, he cannot digest them, but will cast them out, as raw and undigested matter. It is a sentence full of terror if it be duely considered. Thou, that art indifferent in respect of sin, thou art unfit to be made one with Christ, and partaker of the life and grace of Christ, or any of his saving comforts; thou goest against the stomach of Christ, thou provokest him to cast thee out, as a thing lothsome and abominable: and and that is a fearful condition.

Again, is it so, that sin must be odious and hateful unto us? must we hate all

Reasons. 1.

2.

Note.

17  
18

Use 1.

Indifferency  
in respect of  
sin, reprov'd.

Use 2.



Men may and  
ought to be  
zealous in  
speaking  
against sin.

all manner of evil? Surely then, men may be zealous and fervent in speaking against sin, yea, they ought so to be, especially Ministers. Here is a justification of our often and fervent speaking against sin. Men find fault with us, that we often hit upon their sins, and we are ever galling them with the same things; they shame not to do evil, to lye, to slander, and to have their drunken meetings, and the like: but they cannot away to hear of these things. Alas, we cannot but speak against open grosse sins, if our hearts be right within us; we hate sin both in our selves and in others, and we cannot but speak against sin, so long as men go on in sin: we desire their leaving and forsaking of sin, and that sin may be odious and hateful to men. And know this, whosoever thou art, that sinne must be odious and hateful to thee, if thou wouldst prove thy self a true Believer.

And to shut up this in a word; Wouldst thou make it good to the comfort of thine own soul, that thou art a true Believer? yea, wouldst thou make it good that thou lovest God, and lovest his Truth? Then look thou *hate and detest sin, Psal. 97. 10.* yea all manner of evil, even every known evil and sin. Thou must not hate one sin, and like of another, and haply hate Drunkenness, and love Covetousness, or hate Covetousness, and love Swearing. If thou dost not hate Atheisme, thou lovest not God: if thou hatest not Heresie, thou lovest not Gods Truth: if thou hate not Sabbath-breaking, thou lovest not the right keeping and sanctifying of it. Hereby try thy self, and look that thou hate every known sin, because it is sin and displeasing to God.

*Quest.*

Haply thou wilt say, How shall I know that I hate sin, because it is sin and displeasing to God?

*Ans.*

I answer, By two things especially.

First, if no reward can allure thee, nor any punishment force thee upon any known sin, but thou canst willingly rather embrace death, then wittingly sin against God.

Secondly, if thou make conscience not onely of open and grosse sins, but of the very thought of evil, and thou makest as much conscience of sin in secret, as in the open view of the world. Hence thou maiest conclude, that thou dost hate and abhor sin, because it is sin and displeasing to God: and thence thou maiest gather to thy comfort, that thou art a true believer, and a child of God, and that thou lovest God, and art beloved of God in the Son of his love, Christ Jesus.

#### VERS. 16.

*If I do then that which I would not, I consent to the Law, that is good.*



N that which the *Apostle* said in the Verse before, that *what he would, that he did not; but what he hated, that he did;* he brings in two inferences, two conclusions; one in this Verse another in the Verse following. The sum and substance of his first inference and conclusion laid before us in this Verse is this, that there was in some sort a good harmony, and a consent between Gods Law and his heart, being now renewed by grace, in that he hated and abhorred the evil that was done by him, because it was evil and sinful, and contrary to the Law of God.

And thus he concludes, If I do what I would not, I consent to the Law of God that it is good. But the first of these is true: therefore the second. Now the ground of this inference is this general;

That whosoever he be, that wills not the evil he doth, but disallows and hates it, and that out of a love, and liking, and respect to the Law of God, and a consent



consent to that, he seeing that evil which he doth, to be contrary to the Law of God, doubtlesse he approves of the Law of God to be good, and to be the perfect rule of righteousness.

Thus we have the *Apostles* first inference and conclusion, and the ground of it. Now the words of this Verse need not long to be stood on, touching the sense and meaning of them.

*If I do then that which I would not.* These words we had in effect before: Interpretation and the meaning of them is briefly this; *If I act and do inwardly in my mind, my will and my affections, and outwardly in my words and actions, that evil that I in part would not do, as I am regenerate, because it is evil, and against the Law of God, then I consent to the Law, that it is good.*

(Consent) The word in the Original properly signifies to confesse, to witnesse with a thing, or to speak with a thing to which it is applyed. As here, being applyed to the Law of God, the meaning is, as if the *Apostle* had said, *I confesse the goodness of the Law of God, I subscribe to it, I agree to it, I bear witnesse with it to be good, I consent, or I assent in my mind and judgment, and in mine heart I approve the Law of God to be good.*

By the word (*Law*) as before, we are to understand the moral Law of God, (*That it is good*) that is, as before we expounded the word, *Vers. 12.* that it requires and commands only such things as be good, and forbids the contrary all manner of evil, and shews the good way in which men are to walk to life everlasting. Thus then conceive we the meaning of the *Apostle* in the words of this Verse; as if he had said,

*If I then act and do inwardly in my mind, will and affections, and outwardly in my words and actions that evil that I in part would not do, as I am regenerate, and as my heart is renewed by grace, and that, because it is evil, and against the Law of God. Surely then, I agree to the moral Law of God, and I bear witnesse with it to be good, I consent, or I assent to the goodness of the Law of God, in my mind and judgment, and in mine heart renewed by grace, I approve the Law of God to be such a Law, as requires and commands only good things, and forbids the contrary, even all manner of evil, and shewing the good way in which men are to walk to life everlasting.*

First, hence observe we the *Apostles* inference, *If (saith he) I act and do the evil I would not,* the evil that in some sort is against my mind, my will, and my purpose, then I consent to the Law, that it is good; I then assent to the goodness of the Law of God, I approve the Law of God to be such a Law, as requires and commands only good things, and forbids the contrary, Hence note we briefly thus much;

That when men do evil against their purpose and will, they do evil, and they would not do it, they have in them a full purpose and resolution, not to sin against God in any thing wittingly and willingly, and yet they sin against that purpose, then they consent to the Law of God, then they yeeld to the Word of God commanding good duties, that it is good, that plainly proves it, and thereupon they may certainly conclude, that they in their minds assent to the good Law of God, and approve of it in their hearts to be good; it is a plain evidence of consent to the goodness of the Law of God, when men do evil, and they would not do it, but they would willingly be freed from doing of evil, and from breaking of the holy Laws and Commandements of God.

Thus our *Apostle* here concludes directly, *If I do that evil which I would not, I consent to the Law, that it is good.* This I note in a word, to teach every one of us to try our selves, touching our consent to the Word of God. No doubt, every one will say he likes the Word of God, and he approves of it, and it were pity of his life if he did not consent to the truth, and to the goodness of the Word of God. But take heed, whosoever thou art, that thou do not deceive thy self: try thy self by the note now delivered.

Doest thou find, that the evil thou dost, thou wouldst not do it, it is against thy

*Doct. 1.*

It is an evidence of consent to the goodness of Gods Law, when men do evil, and they would not do it.

*Use:*



A ground of  
trial.

thy purpose and mind? Thereupon thou maiest certainly conclude, that thou dost consent to the truth and goodnesse of the Word of God: that is a good evidence indeed, that thou dost approve the Law of God to be good, in commanding good things, and good also in forbidding of evil. But on the other side, if thou find that the evil thou dost, is pleasing to thee, and thou dost wittingly, and willingly, and purposely do any known evil, deceive not thy self, out of all question thou dost not consent to the truth and goodnesse of the Word of God; thou maiest think thou givest assent to the Word of God, and dost approve of it in thine heart; but the truth is, there is no such matter, thy doing evil wittingly and willingly, is an evidence against thee, yea, it proves plainly, that thou deniest the truth and goodnesse of the Word of God; and if thou go on in that course, thou shalt be punished as one that denies the truth of the Word of God, and with-holds the truth of it in unrighteousnesse. Rom. 1. 18. *The wrath of God shall one day be revealed from heaven against thee*, yea, it is a fearful step to the unpardonable sin against the holy Ghost, to deny the truth and goodnesse of the Word of God.

Note.

"It is reported of Julian the Apostata, that he first began to account the Word of God foolishnesse, and then he persecuted the Professors of it with mocks and taunts; and so by degrees fell to that foul sin of Apostasie. Full little do men think of this, that their doing evil purposely and willingly, proves this against them, that they deny the truth and goodnesse of the Word of God, and are going on to that fearful unpardonable sin against the holy Ghost: but indeed so it is. And if a man appeal to their own hearts, if they deal truly, their own hearts must needs yeeld to it, that they doing evil purposely, they deny the truth and goodnesse of the Word of God. Doth not thine own heart, whosoever thou art, while thou goest on willfully in sin, say thus to thee, *God is mercifull*, and as it is, *Deut. 29. 19. Thou shalt have peace, though thou walke according to the stubbornnesse of thine own heart?* And what is this but to deny the truth of God, the Word of God, that revealing that God is just aswell as merciful? and as it follows, *Deut. 29. 20. that he will not be merciful unto him, but the wrath of the Lord and his jealousie shall smoke against that man, and every curse that is written in this Book, shall light upon him, and the Lord shall put out his name from under heaven.* Therefore take heed of doing evil purposely and willingly.

Consider we further, that the Apostle saith, he doing that he would not, yet he consented to the Law of God, that it was good. And this consent of his, we made a second argument and proof of his regeneration. That therefore he was certainly a man truly regenerate, because howsoever he was over-carried to do that he would not, yet he consented to the Law of God, that it was good.

Object.

Now against this, there is also objection made; some do thus object against it; say they, unregenerate persons may, and do sometimes consent to the Law of God, and they may and do approve of it to be good, yea, sometimes unregenerate persons delight in the Law and in the Word of God, as it is said of Herod, that he heard John Baptist gladly. *Mar. 8. 20.* and of Temporaries, such as have onely a temporary faith, it is said, *Matth. 13. 20. That they received the word with joy.* And *Heb. 6. 5.* it is said of Apostataes, that they have tasted of the good Word of God. And therefore it is not a true note of the Apostles regeneration, or the regeneration of any other, that they consent to the Law of God, and approve it to be good.

Answer.

For answer to this, first know, that unregenerate persons are either openly wicked; Or they are hypocrites, such as are openly wicked, being convinced of sin in their consciences; and their consciences galling them for sin, it may be, they acknowledge the Law of God to be good; but how? Surely, as Pharaoh acknowledged the Lord to be righteous, *Exod. 9. 27.* not out of any love or liking of the Law. No, they could wish there were no Law at all, they hate it because



because it condemns their ſins, and ſhews them the curſe of it due to them for their ſins.

As for hypocrites, they outwardly approve of the Law and Word of God, in outward profeſſion only, but they have no true inward love and liking of it; they ſuffer it not to work on their hearts, and to reform them in their inward affections, they only yeeld an outward conformity to it, in reſpect of their eaſe, pleaſure, profit, or the like, but inwardly they reject it, and caſt it behind them, *Pſal. 50. 17.*

Again, for the inſtances brought: *Herod* indeed heard *John Baptiſt* gladly: but if we mark the Text, it was only in ſome things, he liked of ſome things *John* taught, not all that he heard from him; and ſo he did not thorowly like of the Word preached by *John*, but only in part, and that only in ſome ſiniſter and by-reſpect. And ſo alſo Temporaries, they receive the Word with joy, not out of any love and liking of it, but in reſpect of eaſe, or gain, or credit, or the like. And for Apoſtates, it is true indeed; they taſte, and as it were ſipp of the ſweetneſſe of the Word of God, they touch it as it were with the tip of their tongues, but they never ſend it down into their hearts, they digeſt it not, it is not converted and turned as good nourishment into the ſubſtance of their ſouls, to the true comfort and ſtrengthening of them, and ſo they have in them but a light and vaniſhing, and no true ſound and ſolid approbation of the Law and Word of God: And therefore ſtill it remains a true note of the *Apoſtles* regeneration, that howſoever he was over-carried by his own corruption, to do the evil he would not have done; yet he conſented to the Law of God, that it was good.

And it is a true note to others, that they alſo are truly regenerate, if they find, that though they do the evil they would not do, yet they conſent to the Law and Word of God; they aſſent to it in their minds and judgments, and in their hearts they approve of the goodneſſe of it, and they love, and like it, and cleave to it in their inward affections. In that the *Apoſtle* ſaith, *I conſent to the Law of God, that it is good*; we are given to underſtand yet further thus much,

A true note of regeneration.

That true Believers, Gods children, they conſent to the Law of God, they have in them not only knowledg of the Law of God, and aſſent to it in their minds and in their judgments, but they alſo approve of it in their hearts, they have in them a true love and liking of the Law of God, and that both in commanding of good things, and in forbidding of evil: ſo far forth as men are regenerate, they conſent to the Law of God, and there is a good agreement between their hearts and the good Law of God, and ſin is diſpleaſing to them, and they diſlike it, and diſallow it, and hate it, becauſe it is againſt the good Law of God, and good duties are liked and loved of them, and performed by them, becauſe Gods Law requires them. Thus it is with all Gods children, and ſuch as are truly regenerate.

*Doct. 2:*  
Gods children have in them a true love and liking of Gods Law.

*Pſal. 40. 8.* *David* ſpeaks thus, *I deſired to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy Law is within mine heart.* As if he had ſaid, Thy Will, O Lord, made known to me in thy Law, I do not only know to be holy, and good, and aſſent to it in my mind and judgment, but I like it, I approve of it, I deſire to do it, mine heart is inclined to it; yea, thy Law is within my heart, I willingly imbrace it, my heart conſents to it, and I find a good agreement between thy good Law and my heart. And again, *Pſal. 119. 127:* ſaith *David*, *I love thy Commandements above gold, yea above moſt fine gold:* I do not only know thy Commandements, and aſſent to them in mind and judgment, but I approve of them in my heart, and I have an exceeding great love to them. And then he ſubjoyns in the next Verſ. 128. *I eſteem all thy Precepts moſt juſt, and I hate all false wayes.* As if he had ſaid, I have a true love and liking of thy holy Commandements, and that both in commanding of good things, and in forbidding of evil, there is a ſweet conſent and agreement between my heart, and thy holy Lawes and Commandements,



in whatsoever they either command or forbid ; I like good duties and I perform them, because thy Law requires them, and I dislike evil and sin, and hate it, because thy Law forbids it, and because it is against thy Law. Thus it was with *David*, and thus indeed it is with all Gods children.

And hence it is, that Gods children are ready and willing to obey God in any thing he commands them, be it never so contrary to nature, and never so hard and harsh to flesh and blood. *Gen. 22. 2.* The Lord no sooner said to *Abraham*, *Offer thine onely son Isaac*, even that beloved and dear son, and that with thine own hands, and burn him when thou hast done for a burnt-offering, but he without grudging or gain-saying, was ready to do as the Lord commanded him. The Text saith, *Vers. 3.* that *he rose up early in the morning to do it*, there was in him alacrity and forwardnesse, to do that which the Lord required at his hands : and so it is in all Gods children.

Instance might be given in many other examples, Gods children are ready to do the Will of God made known to them. The Lord no sooner saith to a child of God, *Do this* ; but his heart answers, *I will do it*. And again, no sooner saith the Lord, *Forbear this*, or, *Avoid that* ; but the heart of a child of God answers, *I will forbear it*, and *I will avoid it*. And that strongly confirms the truth of the point in hand, that there is a good agreement between the hearts of Gods children, and the good Law of God : the reason and ground of it is this :

Reason.

Gods Children, and such as are truly regenerate, are born anew of God, whose Law it is, and they have in them that Spirit, from whom the Law of God was breathed, and who is the Author of the Law and of the Word of God, and that Spirit inclines their hearts to the good Law of God, and makes them love and like it, and yeeld willing obedience to it. *Ezech. 36. 27.* saith the Lord, *I will put my Spirit within you. and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.* Yea, that Spirit being powerful in them, makes the Lawes and Commandements of God, which to nature are harsh and hard, easie to them, and makes them not to think them hard and grievous, *1 Joh. 5. 3.* And therefore hereupon we may conclude, that true Believers, and Gods children, have not only knowledg of the Law of God, and do not only assent to it in their minds and judgments, but they also approve of it in their hearts, and have in them a true love and liking of the Law of God ; so far forth as they are regenerate, they consent to the Law of God, and there is a good agreement between their hearts and the good Law of God ; they dislike and hate sin, because it is against the good Law of God, and they like good duties, and perform them, because Gods Law requires them.

Use I.

Whence it is,  
that the holy  
Commande-  
ments of God  
are easie to  
Gods Chil-  
dren.

Now this serves to discover unto us, whence it is that the holy Commandements of God that are harsh and hard to nature, and to men that are in their natural condition, are in some sort easie to Gods children, and that Gods children willingly yeeld to that which God commands, which others wrestle and strive against, and will by no means be brought to bend unto. Surely hence it is, the hearts of Gods children being renewed by grace, consent to the Law of God, and there is a good agreement between them and the good Law of God, they have in them that Spirit from whom the Law of God was breathed, and that Spirit makes their hearts, which of themselves are wayward and averse to every thing that is good, plyable and inclinable to the good Law of God.

Say to an angry furious man or woman, one that is yet in the dregs of nature, Thou must forgive, Thou must love thy Neighbour, Thou must blesse them that curse thee, and do good to them that hurt thee ; he being yet in his natural state, he cries out, These be things impossible ; how can one yeeld to such a Law ? But tell a child of God of these things, and let him understand that this is his duty, and he willingly yeelds unto it, and his heart consents to the good Word of God ; he hath in him that Spirit, that makes men that are as Wolves, Bears, and Tigres, put off their brutish and savage nature, *Isai. 11. 6, 7.*

Again,



Again, Is it ſo, that true Believers, Gods children, have not only knowledg of the Law of God, and do not only aſſent unto it, but their hearts alſo approve of it, and ſo far forth as they are regenerate, they conſent to the Law of God, they diſlike and hate ſin, becauſe the Law of God forbids it, and they like good duties, becauſe the Law of God requires them? Surely then, this points out a plain difference between Gods children, and others that are either openly wicked or hypocrites, for it is far otherwiſe with them: the ungodly man and the hypocrite may indeed in his mind and judgment aſſent to the good Law of God, he may, being convinced in conſcience, acknowledg ſuch and ſuch things to be good, and ſuch and ſuch things to be evil and ſinful; but in the mean time his heart is not inclined to that he acknowledgeth, and his heart approves not of it, becauſe Gods Law commands it, and his heart doth not diſlike and hate that he knowes to be ſin, becauſe the Law of God forbids it. No, no; he rather hates the Commandement, and he could wiſh there were no ſuch Commandement: for example, the Drunkard, being in conſcience convinced and preſſed with it, will ſometimes confeſſe Drunkenneſſe to be evil, yet his heart diſlikes it not, his heart is not inclined to hate that ſin, but he could rather wiſh there were no Word of God againſt that ſin. Yea, if we obſerve it, and if the ungodly and hypocrite themſelves do obſerve it, they ſhall find, that they neither do any good thing, nor eſchewe any evil, becauſe the Law of God commands the one, and forbids the other, but they ever have reſpect to gain, or credit, or pleaſure, or pain, or the like; *“and it is ſtill themſelves they aym at, in doing good, or in eſchewing evil, and not the Law and Word of God: and ſo it is with them in all other things; it may be, the joyes of heaven being ſpoken of, do ſomewhat affect them, and when they hear of the pains of hell they are ſomewhat aſtoniſhed; and it may be, they know God to be of infinite Majeltie and Power, and that none is able to indure the fierceneſſe of his wrath; it may be, theſe things a little touch them when they hear of them; but it is only, becauſe they would eſcape the wrath of God and his judgments, and ſo it is ſtill themſelves that they love: if there were neither heaven nor hell, they would not care for God, nor for the Word of God.”*

*Uſe. 2.*  
A difference  
between Gods  
children and  
others, diſco-  
vered.

*Note.*

But on the other ſide, true Believers, and Gods children, they obey God in his Word, out of a love to God, and their ſouls are not ſo dear to them, as the Name of God is to ſee that glorified; and they as it were carry their lives in their hands, and they are ready to yeeld them up to the glory of his Name, and they conſent to the Law of God in their hearts, and they diſlike and hate ſinne, becauſe the Law of God forbids it, and they like good duties, becauſe the Law of God requires them. And thus it muſt be with thee, if thou wouldſt make it good to the comfort of thine own ſoule, that thou art a Child of God.

Haply thou wilt ſay, How ſhall I know that I diſlike and hate ſin, becauſe the Law of God forbids it; and that I like good duties, becauſe the Law of God requires them?

*Queſt.*

I answer, by this thou ſhalt certainly know it: If thou find thine heart equally affected to all and every Commandement of God, and that thy heart is equally inclined to the keeping of all and every one of Gods Commandements, and thou doſt not think any thing that the Word of God commands or forbids, to be light, or that the doing or not doing of it as a trifling ſin, but thou makeſt conſcience of the leaſt evil and ſin; not only of Theft, Murder, and ſuch like, but of Sabbath-breaking, of Swearing by Faith and Troth, of Vanity in apparel, and ſuch like: if thou think thou doſt diſlike ſin, becauſe it is forbidden in the Law of God, and thou loveſt good duties, becauſe the Law of God requires them, and yet thou art partial in doing good, and avoyding evil; thou makeſt choyce of what good thou wilt do, and what evil thou wouldſt avoid; thou abſtaineſt from Murder, and Theft, and yet makeſt no conſcience of Sabbath-breaking, Open rayling, and haply thou givest to the poor, and yet thou

*Anſw.*



art carelesse of other good duties, thou deceivest thy self, that will yeeld thee no true comfort : for as *Jam. 2. 11.* *There is the same Law-giver,* and he that commands one thing, commands another; and he that forbids one thing, forbids another : and *if thou wittingly and willingly break one Commandment, thou art guilty of all,* Vers. 10.

If then thou wouldst be sure, that thou dost dislike sin, because the Law of God forbids it, and that thou likest good duties, and performest them, because Gods Law requires them, then never rest, till thou find that thou art equally affected to every Commandment of God, and that thou art equally inclined to the keeping of all and every one of Gods Commandments, and that thou dost not think any thing, that the Word of God commands or forbids, light and trifling, but that thou makest conscience of the least evil and sin.

*Use 3.*  
Ignorance of  
Gods Law, a  
fearful thing.

Last of all, is it so, that true Believers, and Gods children, do not only know the Law of God, and assent to it in their minds, but their hearts also approve it? Surely then, their case must needs be fearful that are ignorant of the Law of God. Can they yeeld consent of heart to the good Law of God, and approve of it in their hearts, that are ignorant of it? It is not possible. Consider this all you that are ignorant of Gods Law, you cannot comfort your selves with this that you are Gods children. No, no; Gods children not only know the Law of God, but they also approve of it in their hearts : now you are so far from that, as you know not the good Law of God, and so your case is fearful. Oh then labour you for knowledge of the Law of God, whilest you have time and means, that so you may approve of it in your hearts, and yeeld sound obedience to it both in heart and life.

#### VERS. 17.

*Now then, it is no more I that do it, but the sin that dwelleth in me.*

**I**N this Verse we have the second inference and conclusion laid before us, that the *Apostle* brings in on that he said Verse 15. that *the good he would, that he did not : but the evil he hated, that he did.* Thereupon the *Apostle* concludes in this Verse on this manner : If I hate the evil I do, then I being renewed by grace, do it not. And he further shewes what it was that did it, namely, the sinful corruption that still in part remained in him. *But* (saith he) *sin that dwelleth in me,* that doth it. And this inference the *Apostle* delivers with a note of difference, in respect of himself, comparing his present state with his former, that now it was not with him, as in former times, and he saith, *Now then, it is no more I that do it :* not barely, then it is not I, but, *then it is no more I that do it, but the sin that dwelleth in me.*

*Now then, it is no more I that do it, but the sin that dwelleth in me.* Here to make up the full sense, those words used in the Verse before (*if I do that which I would not*) are to be resumed and repeated, they being the common antecedent to both the *Apostles* inferences and conclusions : As if he had said, *If I do that which I would not, then it is no more I that do it. It is no more I ;* that is, It is no longer I, as I am now renewed by grace, and in the state of regeneration. it is not any longer I, as I am regenerate, and so far forth as I am regenerate that now do it : (*do it*) that is, that evil that I would not, and that evil and that sin that I hate. (*but the sin that dwelleth in me, that doth it.*)

(*Sin*) is here taken as before, for sinful corruption, the corruption of nature, or inborn sin (*that dwelleth in me.*) This Phrase is *Metaphorical*, it is borrowed and taken from *Houholders*, from such as have their certain abode and residence in a place or house, and do there busie themselves, and exercise their power and authority, and it signifieth the true and powerful presence of sin, and the strong working of it, as the Spirit of God is said to dwell in true Believers, *Rom. 8. 9.*

*I Cor.*



1 Cor. 3. 16. ſignifying the true, powerful and working preſence of the Spirit in them : and ſo Satan with ſeven other ſpirits is ſaid to return to the houſe whence he came, and to enter in, and to dwell there, *Matth. 12. 45.* that is, more powerfully, and more ſtrongly to take poſſeſſion of that man. And ſo the *Apoſtles* meaning, in ſaying, *ſin that dwelleth in me*, is this ; The ſin that is ſtill remaining and abiding in me, and hath a powerful and a working preſence in me, even forcibly croſſing the motions of the Spirit in my heart, and haling and pulling me to evil and ſin. Thus then briefly conceive we the *Apoſtles* meaning in this Verſe ; as if he had ſaid,

*And again if I do that evil, which I would not, and that evil that I hate, then it is no longer I, as I am regenerate, and ſo far forth as I am regenerate, that do that evil, but the ſinful corruption, the corruption of nature, that is ſtill remaining and abiding in me in part, and hath a powerful and working preſence in me even forcibly croſſing the motions of the Spirit in my heart, and haling and pulling me to evil, that is it that doth the evil that is done.*

Here again obſerve we the *Apoſtles* inference, mark his concluſion here brought in on his former antecedent, thus he concludes : If (ſaith he) I do the evil which I would not do, If I do that evil that is againſt my mind, my will, my purpoſe and reſolution, as I am now regenerate, then it is not I that do it, but it is the ſin that dwells in me that doth it, that is his inference. Hence note we further thus much,

That when men do evil, and they would not do it, the evil they do, is againſt their mind, their will and their holy purpoſe, they reſolve not to ſin againſt God in any thing wittingly & willingly, and yet they are over-carried by the ſtrength of corruption, and do ſin, then it may be truly ſaid, It is not they that ſin, and the evil done by them, may in ſome ſort be ſaid not to be their ſin. If the thing be rightly underſtood, and not miſ-conceived, and if a man or woman be able to ſay with the *Apoſtle*, and that truly, *I do the evil I would not do*, then he or ſhe may alſo conclude with the *Apoſtle*, and truly ſay, *It is not I that do it*, but the inbred corruption that ſtill in part abides in me, that doth it : and to this agrees that of *John*, 1 *Joh. 3. 9.* It is a plain Text to this purpoſe : *Whoſoever (ſaith he) is born of God, ſinneth not : for his ſeed remaineth in him ; neither can he ſin, be- cauſe he is born of God. Whoſoever is born of God, ſinneth not.* Why ? may ſome ſay, there is no man living on the face of the earth but he ſins. And Saint *John* himſelf ſaith, 1 *Joh. 1. 8.* *If we ſay that we have no ſin, we deceive our ſelves, and the truth is not in us.* What is then his meaning, when he ſaith, *Whoſoever is born of God, ſinneth not* ? Surely this : When they that are truly regenerate and born anew of God, ſin, it is againſt their mind, and againſt their purpoſe, they would not ſo ſin ; and ſo indeed it is as if they ſinned not : and it may be truly affirmed of them, being rightly underſtood, it is not they that ſin, but the corruption of nature that ſtill in part abides in them : and the reaſon of this may eaſily be rendered ; this it is :

That part in man that is truly regenerate, never ſinneth. Now from that part being the better part, they have their denomination, and are called regenerate perſons : and when men are once truly regenerate, they never after that are termed ſinners, enemies to God or ungodly, unleſſe it be when they humble themſelves in a free and ſound confeſſion of their ſins to God : but they are called juſt and righteous, good, and holy, godly, and new creatures, and the like, as *Pſal. 37. 37.* *Pro. 10.* in many Verſes : and ſo that part that is truly regenerate not ſinning, and they taking their denomination from that part, it may be truly ſaid, that they that are born of God, and truly regenerate, ſin not : and we may hold this as a certain truth, when men do evil, and they would not do it, the evil they do, is againſt their mind and purpoſe, that then it may be truly ſaid, being rightly underſtood, it is not they that ſin and do evil, but it is the inbred corruption, that ſtill in part abides in them, that doth it. Now then to make uſe of this ; firſt,

*Doct. 1.*

Evil done by men againſt their mind, will, and holy purpoſe, may in ſome ſort be ſaid, not to be their ſin.

*Reasons*

*Pſal. 37. 37.*  
*Pro. 10. 3, 6, 7,*  
*11, 16, 20, 21,*  
*24, 25, 28, 30,*  
*32.*



## Use 1.

The fond conceit of the Familists and others, met withal.

This Truth meets with that fond conceit of some, who though they give themselves over to all carnal lusts of their own hearts, yet foolishly thus think to excuse themselves, that it is sin that doth evil, and not themselves, as those foolish, phanatical and fantastick spirits the Familists, of all erring spirits the most grosse, they make no conscience of Swearing, of Lying and Equivocating, of Sabbath-breaking, of Drunkenness, of Whoredome and filthiness, they make no bones of any foul sin, and yet they think to excuse themselves by this, that (forsooth) it is the flesh that sinneth, and not they, and they think so to shift off the matter, by laying the burden on the flesh: and so common Drunkards, filthy Adulterers, common Swearers, and the like, they think to excuse and cloake their wicked and vicious life with this, that they do not the evil, but sin that dwells in them. Now such persons, both Familists and others, do most wickedly abuse this holy sentence of the *Apostle*, *It is no more I that do evil, but some that dwells in me.*

The doctrine delivered shews plainly, that this sentence cannot agree to such persons: for why? they cannot say and speak the truth, that they do evil, and they would not do it, and the evil they do is against their mind and purpose, and that they hate the evil they do: No, no, there is no such matter in them, they do evil wittingly and willingly, yea they rush into sin, *as the barbed horse rusheth into the battel, Jer. 8. 6.* And therefore they cannot thus plead excuse, and thus shift off the matter, that it is not they that do evil, but sin that dwells in them. If they so do, they abuse this holy sentence, and they misapply it, and it will not serve their turn. If thou wouldst find comfort in this holy Sentence, and apply it to thy self with comfort, thou must be able to say with the *Apostle*, *The evil I do, I would not do.* I allow it not, nay, I hate it: and then indeed thou mayst say with comfort, *It is not I that do evil, but the sin that dwells in me.*

And this indeed is a sweet comfort to Gods children, their own hearts witnessing with them, that the evil they do, they would not do it: they may then say, It is not they that do it, but sin that dwells in them; and the evil done by them may in some sort be said not to be their sin, if it be rightly understood, and so, to drive the point to a second use.

## Use 2.

Comfort for such as are tempted to strange evils.

Is it so, that evil done by the regenerate, in some sort is not their sin, they being unwilling to do it? Surely, then much lesse is the evil to which they only are tempted, and to which they yeeld not, much lesse is that their sinne. Here is then comfort for such as are tempted to strange evils, and whom Satan doth vex with fearful suggestions; as to blaspheme God, to deny God, or any way to think amisse of God: do they thereupon think amisse of themselves? do they thereupon hold themselves most vile wretches? do they beat back the temptation? Surely, then it is not their sin: even the best may be tempted to most horrible sins. What more fearful, then to worship the Devil in person? Yet to this sin was Christ himself tempted, *Matth. 4. 9.* Therefore be not thou discouraged, though thou be tempted to most grosse and odious sins, if thou yeeld not unto them.

Observe we further, the *Apostle* saith, *It is no more I that do it, but the sinne that dwelleth in me.* He saith not barely, It is not I that do it; but, It is no more I; I find now a difference in my self, from that it was wont to be with me in doing evil: It was heretofore I that did evil; but now it is not I that do it, but the sin that dwelleth in me.

Doctrine 2.  
Difference between Gods children and the unregenerate, in doing evil.

Hence we may gather a manifest difference between Gods children, and such as be unregenerate, in doing evil: Gods children, they sin no more, it is no more they that sin, that is, they sin not wholly with full consent of will, because they have in them not only flesh, but Spirit; not only corruption but grace also: but unregenerate persons, they sin wholly with full consent of will, and it is they that do the sin, and the evil that is done by them, they do it indeed, they pour out themselves to sin. *Jude Epist. vers. 11.* *They walk after the lusts of their own hearts,*



hearts, because they are wholly and altogether flesh and corruption. And this difference between the regenerate and unregenerate in sinning, we find put down in many places of Scripture.

If then for the use of it, thou wouldst prove thy self a child of God, thou must find it thus with thee, that thou art able to say, The evil that is done by thee, it is not now thou that dost it, but sin that dwells in thee: "*and know this for a truth, That a child of God is never so given over as to sin with his whole Will in the greatest evil he doth; there is some striving in him against it, though it be but faintly, and with great feebleness; as it comes to passe in some strong and violent temptation: but he is ever able to say, It is not I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*" Labour thou to find it thus with thee, if thou wouldst make it good to the comfort of thine own soul, that thou art a child of God.

Now further, in that the Apostle addes, *but sin that dwelleth in me*; that is, as we shewed, sinful corruption, the corruption of nature that still remains in me in part, and hath a powerful and working presence in me even forcibly crossing the good motions of the Spirit, and haling and pulling me to sin. Hence we are given to understand thus much,

That the best of Gods children, even the most holy and most regenerate that live on the face of the earth, are not freed from the inhabitation of sin, from the in-dwelling of sin. Howsoever it is true, that corruption of nature remains not in Gods children, in the full force and strength of it, as it doth in the unregenerate, and doth not raige in them, yet the reliques of it are still abiding in them, and it hath still a powerful working presence, crossing them in good things, and haling and pulling them to sin; it is still as a bold, saucy, and troublesome In-mate, it dwells in them, and shall dwell in them so long as they live in this world.

And to this purpose we have many plain evidences of Scripture, *Prov. 20. 9, Who can say, I have made mine heart clean? I am clean from my sinne? I am in this world without all reliques of natural corruption? As if he had said, None can say it. Eccles. 7. 22. saith the Preacher, There is no man just in the earth, that doth good, and sinneth not, Gal. 5. 16. Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. He saith not, The lusts of the flesh shall not be in you. No, but, You shall not fulfil them. And he subjoynes, ver. 17. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the same things that ye would. The flesh is still in you, and it wrastleth and striveth against the spirit, even forcibly crossing the good motions of the Spirit, haling you to sin. Jam. 3. 2. In many things we sin all, even we all, and every one of us with out exception do sin in divers things. These and many other testimonies of Scripture do plainly prove the point in hand, that howsoever the corruption of nature remains not in Gods Children, in the full force and strength of it, yet it still abides in them in part, and hath still a powerful and working presence in them, crossing them in good things, and haling them and pulling them on to evil; it is still an In-dweller in them, and shall dwell in them so long as they be in this world.*

And this may be further cleared and confirmed, in that Gods Children are subject to many chastisements and afflictions yea, to mortality and death: for surely, it could not stand with the justice of God, to lay afflictions and chastisements on his children, and they could not be subject to mortality and death, their souls could not part from their bodies, if there were not corruption and sin still abiding in them; that is it that makes them subject and lyable to chastisements and to death itself. And therefore this is a certain truth, that the best of Gods children, even the most holy, and most regenerate that live on the face of the earth, are not freed from the inhabitation of sin; it is still as a bold and troublesome In-mate dwelling in them, and shall dwell in them so long as they live in this world.

Now then, this being a truth, it serves to over-turn some erroneous and false

*Use.*  
How a man may prove himself a child of God.

*Note.*

*Dost. 3.*  
The best of Gods children have sin still dwelling in them, as a bold Inmate.

*Reason.*

*Use 2.*



Some erroneous opinions confuted.

false opinions both of Papists and others; as first, that of the Papists. That by Baptisme, original corruption is utterly abolished, and quite taken away: so they hold and teach. Now that opinion cannot stand with this truth, That the best of Gods children, and the most regenerate that live on the face of the earth, have sin still dwelling in them in part, and this truth also meets with that proud conceit of the Familists and others, that hold, that a perfection of inherent holiness may be attained to in time of this life; and they brag of such a perfection of purity and holiness already attained to in themselves, as that they need not any further to be purged from corruption. This is a proud conceit, and a most idle and wicked fancy, and it cannot stand with the truth of God now delivered, that the best and most holy that live on the face of the earth, have sin still dwelling in them, and *have still need to be renewed in the Spirit of their mindes in the purest part of their souls, Ephes. 4.23.* And they that find not sin still crossing the good motions of the Spirit in them, and haling them unto sin, know not themselves, they are not acquainted with their own state and condition.

Use 2.  
Comfort against the feeling of in-dwelling corruption, disturbing and crossing men in good purposes, and in good things.

Again, is it so, that the best of Gods children, even the most holy and most regenerate that live on the face of the earth, are not freed from the in-dwelling of sin, but have sin as a bold and troublesome In-mate dwelling in them, disturbing and troubling them, and crossing them in good things, and haling them to sin? Then be not thou too much dejected and cast down, when thou feelest corruption still in thee, crossing thee in good purposes and good things, and haling thee on to sin; it is a thing that many times troubles and disquiets a poor soul, even an honest and good hearted Christian man or woman, that he or she are crossed in good purposes, and in good things, and are either hindered from doing of them, or they do them untowardly, and they are sometimes haled to do evil.

Oh this troubles them, and this sometimes makes them to call their state into question: Thou mayest remember, whosoever thou art, thou hast still corruption dwelling in thee, and it shall dwell in thee so long as thou art in this world, and it is a bold and a sawcy In-mate, it will be troublesome to thee, it will be busie with thee in the best purposes and actions, and it will crosse thee in good things, and hale and pull thee on to sin.

Therefore think on this: and though thou hast cause to be humbled, and to labour and strive against the corruption of thy heart, yet thou hast no cause thereupon to be utterly dejected and cast down. No, no: it is no otherwise with thee, then with the dearest of Gods children, so long as they are in this world: and know this for thy comfort, that it is a mercy of God, that thou art troubled for sin dwelling in thee, and crossing thee in goods things; thousands in the world are not troubled for sin reigning in them and exercising dominion over them, and holding them as slaves under the power of it, they think it nothing to be under such a lord, who indeed can pay them no better wages, but the damnation of hell: and therefore blesse God for it, that he hath opened thine eyes to see thy corruption: and be watchful over thine own heart, in regard of corruption still dwelling in it.

Use 3.  
Gods children must look warily to themselves.

On the ground of doctrine now delivered, Gods children must further learn to look warily to themselves, and they must take heed they be not circumvented by Satan, they have a treacherous foe, that still continually lyes in wait to betray them into the hands of the Devil, and that as neer as may be, even in their own bosome, the corruption of their own hearts: and therefore it behoves every child of God to be very watchful and circumspect: and such as have the greatest measure of grace, may not be secure and confident on that strength, and think that they are so furnished with grace and strength, that they are out of danger, at least, of being over-taken with any foul and grosse sin. No, no: they must take heed of that; if a man have an In-mate, an In-dweller, that he knowes is ready to cut his throat; and watcheth every opportunity that is offered,



red, to do him a mischief, without question he will be sure to have an eye to that In-mate, and he will watch him, and take diligent heed of him, lest he do him hurt before he be aware.

Surely, this is the very case of us all; and the best of Gods children have sin in them, that is, such an In-mate, as is ready on any opportunity offered, to cut the throat of our souls; yea, sin is such an In-mate, as Gods children cannot be rid of, they cannot be freed from, so long as they live on the face of the earth.

It saith to them, as *Ruth* said to *Naomi*, *Ruth* 1. 16, 17. *Whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou dwellest, I will dwell; where thou dyest, will I dye, and there will I be buried*: nothing but death shall part us, and sunder us quite one from another; Therefore Gods children had need to be vigilant, and wary, and circumspect, lest they be circumvented. And indeed whosoever seeth his own corruption, truly he will be shie and wary of the very appearance of evil: and none are more carelesse and secure, then they that see not their in-dwelling corruption. "*Without question, Job was never an Adulterer; yet being privy to his own in-dwelling corruption, He made a covenant with his eyes,* *Job* 31. 1.

Note.

And thus it ought to be with all Gods children; they are to make covenants with their eyes, ears, and all the parts and members of their bodies, and to watch over their hearts narrowly; they have a secret foe that dwells in them, ready to betray them into the hands of Satan, who seeks their destruction; and therefore they cannot be too heedful and watchful over their own hearts, in regard of in-dwelling corruption, and especially they are to watch over them in time of prosperity, and when they have abundance of outward things: for then they are in greatest danger to be surpris'd, and over-taken with pride, deadnesse of heart, self-love, and the like, *Prov.* 1. 32.

#### VERS. 18.

*For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing: for to Will is present with me, but I find no means to perform that which is good.*



IN this Verse, our Apostle falls on the second degree of the Spiritual combat between the flesh and the Spirit, in them that be truly regenerate, still insisting in his own example; and having shewed before, that by sin he was brought to do the evil he would not, that being the first degree of the spiritual conflict; Here he comes to the second degree of it, and shews that he by sin was hindred from doing the good which he would. And this is propounded *Verse* 18.

and proved, first by the contrary effects, *Verse* 19. and then by the contrary causes, the Law moving to good, and he thereunto consenting, and sin hindring him, *Verses* 20, 21. that is the general matter of the 18, 19, 20, and 21. *Verses*.

Now touching the dependance of the 18. *Verse* on the foregoing matter, thus it is; the *Apostle* having said in the *Verse* before, that sin dwelt in him, in the first words of the words of the 18. *Verse*, he confirms that by his own experience and knowledg. that he knew it, and found it to be so in himself, and he affirms on his own knowledg. that in him there was no good thing dwelling: and therefore sin dwelling in him (expounding his own meaning, lest he should be mistaken, in saying, that in him dwelt no good thing, namely thus, that he meant in his flesh:) for saith he, *I know that in me, that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing*, and then he further explains and confirms the Proposition, that in him, that is, in his flesh dwelt no good thing, by an argument from the effect of sin in himself, namely, the doing of good hindred, that he could not perform it; he saith



faith, he was hindred in doing good, so as he found no means to perform it; and he further amplifies that effect, by his will to good, as he was now regenerate, that indeed he willed good, as he was now in the state of regeneration, but he found no power in himself to perform it: for, faith he, *to will is present with me, but I find no means to perform that which is good*: and that could be from no other thing, but from sin dwelling in him.

We have then in this Verse laid before us, first, a Proposition, wherein the Apostle affirms on his own knowledg, that *there was no good thing dwelling in him*, namely, in his flesh. And secondly, a confirmation of that Proposition, from the effect of sin dwelling in him, hindring him in doing of good, amplified by his will to good, as he was now regenerate: That howsoever there was in him, as he was now regenerate, a will to good, yet he found no means to perform it. Of these in order, and first, of the Apostles Proposition. *For I know, that in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing.*

*For I know.* I know, faith the Apostle, that is, I am privy to it, and well acquainted with it, and I frankly and freely confesse and acknowledg it, as a thing well and certainly known to me so to be, (*that in me*) this the Apostle expounds himself in the words following, that is, in my flesh. Now the word *Flesh*, is not here to be taken for the external part of man, the fleshly lump of the body, nor as sometimes it is in Scripture, for the humane nature, as *Joh. 1. 14. The Word was made flesh*: but for the corruption of nature, or for the part unregenerate: and that thorowout, in all the powers and faculties of the soul, it signifies not onely, as the Papists teach, sensuality and the corruption of the inferiour parts of the soul, but the corruption also of the mind, understanding, and will: therefore the Apostle faith, *Rom. 8. 7. The wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God*: which must needs be understood of the very best parts of the soul, wherein wisdom is seated: and *Coloss. 2. 18.* the Apostle speaks plainly, and gives fleshlinesse to the mind rashly puffed up with his fleshly mind, with his carnal corruption, and unregenerate mind. (*Dwelleth*) that is, as before we shewed, abideth, and hath a powerful and working presence (*no good thing.*) By *Good* in this place, we are not to understand natural good, which is the object of the natural appetite, nor yet moral good, which is sometimes apprehended of natural reason, being in full force and strength; but spiritual good, even that which is spiritually holy and good, and is pleasing to God, that good is here meant. Thus then conceive we the meaning of the Apostle in these words, *For I know, that in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing.* As if he had said,

*For I am privy to it, I am well acquainted with it, and I freely and frankly acknowledg it so to be, that in me, that is, in my corrupt nature, and so far forth as I am unregenerate, there is nothing that is truly and spiritually good and holy, nothing that is pleasing to God, remaining and abiding; there is no such thing hath any residence or abode, or hath any powerful and working presence in any power or faculty of my soul.*

We are here to mark, that the Apostle doth not barely affirm this of himself, that in him, that is, in his flesh there was no good thing dwelling: but he affirms it on his own knowledg, he faith, I know it, I am privy to it, I am well acquainted with it, and I freely acknowledg it. Hence two things are offered to us; I will speak of them in order, as first this, hence we are given to understand.

*Dott. 1.*  
Gods children  
well discern  
that there is  
no good thing  
in themselves  
as of them-  
selves.

That Gods children, and as many as are truly regenerate, they are privy to their own corruption, still in part abiding in them, they are well acquainted with it, that in their corrupt and unregenerate nature, so far forth as they are unregenerate, there is no goodnesse, they are not ignorant of it, but they know it well, and they see it, and well discern it, that there is no good thing in themselves, as of themselves, but that all the goodnesse they have in them, is of grace, and meerly of grace, as the Apostle speaks plainly, speaking of himself,

*1 Cor.*



1 Cor. 15. 10. ſaith he, *By the grace of God, I am that I am.* As if he had ſaid, I have no goodneſſe in me as of my ſelf, but all the goodneſſe I have in me, is meerly of grace: and 2 Cor. 3. 5. he ſaith, *we are not ſufficient, we are not able of our ſelves to think any thing that is truly good as of our ſelves, but our ſufficiency is of God.* It is meerly of God and of his grace, that we are able to think a good thought of our ſelves, we cannot think any thing that is truly good. This the Apoſtle was privy to, and this he was well acquainted withall; And ſo indeed are all Gods children, and ſuch as are truly regenerate, they are privy to it, they are well acquainted with it, they ſee it, and well diſcern it, that there is no good thing in themſelves, as of themſelves, and that in their unregenerate part, there is no good thing dwelling: And the reaſon of it is this.

Gods children, and ſuch as are truly regenerate, they have in them the Spirit of grace, and the Spirit of diſcerning, even that Spirit that enables them to ſpie out and diſcern the hidden corruption of their hearts; even the reliques of it ſtill abiding in them, and *their eyes are anointed with eye-ſalve*, ſpoken of Revel. 3. 18. their eyes are opened, and they are truly enlightened. and they are made able to ſee and diſcern what is in them. and ſo they come to be privy to it, and to be well acquainted with it, that there is no good thing in themſelves, as of themſelves. Now then for the uſe of this, firſt;

Reason.

It diſcovers whence it is that moſt men in the world are highly conceited of themſelves, and think that there is ſome goodneſſe in them by nature; yea, in this point men by nature are Popiſh; as the Papiſts do, ſo do they, they magnifie nature, and they are conceited of their pure naturals, and they think if they live a civil honeſt life, they are not to be taxed for any thing, they are in an happy caſe, yea, poor blind ignorant ſouls ſtick not to ſtand on their good hearts, and on their good meaning, and good dealing, and to think they ſhall be ſaved for theſe things. Now whence is this? Surely; from hence; they are not regenerate, they have not the ſpirit of grace and of diſcerning, their eyes are not anointed with the eye-ſalve of the ſpirit, and ſo they think as the Church of Laodicea did, Revel. 3. 7. *that they are rich, and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing, and know not that they are wretched, and miſerable, and blind, and poor, and naked*; their eyes are not opened as the eyes of Gods children be, to ſee and diſcern that there is no good thing in them, as of themſelves, and it is a plain evidence againſt men whoſoever they be, that think they have ſome goodneſſe in them, of themſelves, and that think they are ſo purged from the corruption of ſin, as that they have no more remaining in them, that they know not themſelves, and as one ſaith well, they are *Novi homines*, they are new and ſtrange men indeed, that is, they are notable hypocrites.

Uſe 1.  
Whence is it, that moſt men are highly conceited of themſelves.

Again, is it ſo, that Gods children, and as many as be truly regenerate, are privy to it, and well acquainted with it, that there is no good thing in themſelves, as of themſelves? do they ſee it, and do they well diſcern it? Then do not thou fancy to thy ſelf, that thou art a child of God, unleſſe thou find it thus with thee, that thou ſeeſt and diſcerneſt the hidden corruption of thine own heart, and that thou art well acquainted with it, that there is no good thing in thee as of thy ſelf. Every one of years and diſcretion, can take notice of foul open ſins; but few ſee and diſcern it, and few are thoroughly acquainted with it, that there is no good thing dwelling in them; and if thou once come to ſee it, and well to diſcern it, and complain of it, that there is no goodneſſe in thee, and if thou come to be thorowly acquainted with thine own blindneſſe of mind, deadneſſe of heart, and the like, and ſee theſe things in thy ſelf with grief, and complain of them, that is a good complaint, it ſeals up comfort unto thee, it is a plain evidence that thou art a child of God: for thus indeed it is with Gods children, and with as many as are truly regenerate. Now the ſecond thing offered from hence, in that the Apoſtle ſaith, *I know that in me, (that is) in my fleſh dwelleth no good thing*, I know it, I am privy to it, and I freely acknowledge it, is this.

Uſe 2.  
A note of a child of God; and one truly regenerate:

That



*Doctrine 2.*  
Gods children  
are ready free-  
ly to acknow-  
ledge their  
own weaknesse  
and their own  
infirmities.

That Gods children are not only privy to it, that there is no good thing in them, as of themselves, but they are ready to acknowledge it on any just occasion, they dissemble not the weaknesse of their unregenerate nature, but they are ready to acknowledge it freely and ingeniously, whensoever it may make for the glory of God, and the good of others, yea, Gods children are ready to shame themselves in laying open their sinful infirmities, yea, in charging on themselves foul sins, whereof they have been guilty, when it may be for Gods glory, or any way for the good of others. Thus did the Apostle 1 Tim. 1. 13. 14. 15.

*Use*

This then for the use of it shewes, that it is a wrong and an imputation falsely and unjustly cast on Gods children, that they are conceited of their own holiness, and that they think themselves holy and pure. Alas, there is no such matter: Gods children are privy to that in themselves, which the world cannot charge them withall, and they are ready to acknowledge it as occasion is offered, and they do most of all others abase and condemn themselves, and though *they know nothing by themselves*, in regard of any grosse sin, as the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 4. 4. yet they dare not stand on that, but still condemn themselves, being privy to it, there is in them matter enough deserving condemnation.

In the next place observe we, that the Apostle affirms this of himself, that there was no good thing dwelling in him, as a proof of that which he said in the Verse foregoing that sin dwelt in him: he proves it by this, *That there was in him, namely, in his flesh, no good thing dwelling and abiding.* And thus he reasons, *There is in me, that is, in my flesh, no good thing dwelling;* therefore sin dwells in me. This manner of reasoning points out thus much to us,

*Doct. 3.*  
Such persons  
as have no ho-  
liness nor san-  
ctification in  
them, have  
nothing but  
sin and cor-  
ruption abi-  
ding in all the  
powers and  
faculties of  
their souls.

That where there is no good thing dwelling, there sin dwells. In whomsoever there is no goodnesse, no holiness abiding, in them sin and corruption hath certain residence and abode: yea such men as have in them no holiness nor sanctification at all in them, there is nothing but sin and corruption abiding, and that throughout in all the powers of their souls. Men and women may please themselves in a conceit of some goodnesse in them, and think that they are of a better temper and better nature than others, and that they have more goodnesse in them than others: because haply they are not troubled and annoyed with such particular corruptions as others are: but indeed, unless they be renewed by grace, and have true holiness and sanctification in them, they do but deceive themselves: that they are not troubled and annoyed with those particular corruptions that others are, is but from restraining grace, the Lord moderating and bridling their corruption, that they break not forth; indeed and truth they have nothing but sin and corruption abiding in them, in all the powers and faculties of their souls. For why? Every man and woman in the world is either regenerate or unregenerate; every one is either in his natural state and condition, and bears the image of old Adam, and the image of Satan, or else is translated and set out of that state, and is renewed according to Gods image, and in some measure bears the Image of God; there is no *medium*: no middle nor indifferent state and condition between these two.

And hence it is, that we are often in the Scripture exhorted to *cast off, or put off the old man, and to put on the new*, as Ephes. 4. 22, 23, 24. *Cast off* (saith the Apostle) *the old man, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.* And Coloss. 3. 9, 10. *Lye not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his works, and have put on the new, which is renewed in knowledge, after the Image of him that created him.* Plainly teaching us that, there is no middle state and condition between these two. A man or woman is certainly either regenerate or unregenerate, and bears either the Image of the old man with his works, or the Image of God. And therefore such men or women as have no true holiness nor sanctification in them, there is nothing but sin and corruption abiding in all the powers and faculties of their souls.

And



And this I note, to shew that many deceive themselves ; many in the world please themselves exceedingly in a kind of harmlesse and civility, in that they are of an harmlesse disposition, and in that they are not given to such foul and grosse sins as others are. Oh, herein they blesse themselves, and in this respect they think themselves in a marvellous good case. Alas, if men have no better ground of comfort then this, this is but a poor evidence of comfort ; for this they may be by restraining grace. Art thou then of an harmlesse disposition ? It is well thou art so, it is Gods mercy thou art so, I deny it not. But what holiness and sanctification hast thou in thee ? Art thou, notwithstanding thy harmlesse disposition, ignorant of the will and wayes of God ? Hast thou in thee no true zeal to Gods glory, no true love to God, to his Word and Ordinances, to his Children ? Dost thou find no new quality of grace and holiness wrought in thee ? Deceive not thy self, thy case is not good, thy harmlesse disposition is onely from the over-ruling hand of God, moderating and brideling thy corruption, and indeed there is yet nothing but sin and corruption abiding in all the powers and faculties of thy soul, and as yet thou bearest the image of *Adam* ; Therefore rest not in that, but if thou would have ground of true comfort, never rest till thou find that there is some new goodnesse and holiness wrought in thee, that thou art truly inlightned, that thou hast in thine heart a true love of God, a true delight in good things ; and that indeed will minister true and sound comfort to thy soul.

Use.

Many deceive themselves, in resting in their harmlesse and civility.

Now further, in that the Apostle here affirms of himself, *that in him, that is, in his flesh*, in his corrupt and unregenerate nature, and so far forth as he was unregenerate, *there was no good thing dwelling*, he being a man truly regenerate, and endued with a great measure of grace, he gives us to understand, how it is with the best and most regenerate : and the point hence is this,

That in the best and most regenerate that live in this world, there is no goodnesse of themselves, howsoever there is much goodnesse in them, and they have many graces and good things in them, as they are regenerate and renewed by the Spirit of God, yet as they are still in part flesh, in that flesh of theirs, and in that part of them that is yet unregenerate, there is no good thing to be found, there is no goodnesse in any power or faculty of their souls, no, not in their mindes, so far forth as their mindes be unregenerate : and hence it is that the Apostle saith, *1. Cor. 13. Verse 9. that true Believers know but in part* : and of himself he affirms as much, *Vers. 12. I know in part*. True Believers are but in part inlightened, and so in part, and so far forth as their minds are not inlightned, there is no sound knowledg of God, nor of his will in their minds. And hence it is, that the best and dearest of Gods children we read of in the Scripture, have acknowledged themselves to be vile, filthy, and unclean, as *Isa. 64. 6.* saith the Prophet, *We have all been as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness is as filthy clouts* : even I am unclean as well as others. And *Job 9. 31.* Job saith, *His own clothes made him filthy*.

Doctr. 4.

There is no goodnesse in the best of Gods children of themselves.

Whence it is clear, that howsoever these holy Servants of God and his dear children, were men that had the Spirit of grace and Sanctification in a very ample and large measure, yet they found that there was no goodnesse in them as they were unregenerate, but rather much filthinesse, and much uncleannesse, polluting and defiling the best of their actions. And thus indeed it is with the best of Gods children, and the most regenerate that live in the world, in their flesh, and in that part of them that is unregenerate, there is no good thing to be found ; and the reason is plain, namely this,

Nature, in regard of the corruption of it, not altered nor changed, nor wrought on by grace, is still like it self, there is no goodnesse in it, no, there is nothing in it but corruption, even a pronenesse to all evil, and an untowardness and avernesse to all good things, and the best things in corrupted nature and in the flesh, as the Apostle saith, *Rom. 8. 7. The wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God.*

Reason.



Now Gods children, ſo far forth as they are ſtill in part fleſh and not regenerate, they are not altered and changed, nor wrought on by grace, but the fleſh that remains in them in part, ſtill continues fleſh, and it is ſtill corrupt and naught. and therefore hereupon we may conclude, that howſoever Gods children, and ſuch as are truly regenerate, have many graces and good things in them as they are regenerate and renewed by grace, yet as they are ſtill in part fleſh, in their fleſh, and in that part of them that is yet unregenerate, there is no good thing to be found.

*Uſe 1.*

Unregenerate perſons have not ſo much goodneſſe in them, as to prepare themſelves to receive grace and to merit of congruity.

Now then firſt, is it thus with Gods children and ſuch as are truly regenerate, that in their fleſh, and in their unregenerate part, there is no good thing to be found? What good thing then, I beſeech you, can there be found in unregenerate perſons, and in ſuch as are yet in their natural condition? Is it poſſible that they ſhould have any thing that is truly good in them? No, no: it is altogether impoſſible, and it is erroneous and falſe which the Papiſts hold and teach, that men, before regeneration, have ſo much goodneſſe in them, as they are able to prepare themſelves to receive grace, yea, to do good works that may pleaſe God, and merit of congruity, as they ſpeak. This is a foul and groſſe error, if men that are truly regenerate have no good thing in them, as they are yet fleſh, and ſo far forth as they are unregenerate, certainly ſuch as be unregenerate, cannot poſſible have any thing that is truly good in them, they being altogether fleſh, and nothing but fleſh, neither can they do any thing truly good and pleaſing to God. Things that are good they may do, but as they are done by them, they are not good, nor pleaſing to God, much leſſe do they merit any thing at the hands of God; for their fleſh and their corrupt nature is the ground of all that they do; and ſo the things done by them, though in good in themſelves, yet as they are done by them, they are ſins. Therefore we are to renounce it as an untruth and Popiſh error, that men, before Regeneration, are able to prepare themſelves to receive grace, and to do good works pleaſing to God, and meriting of congruity.

*Uſe 2.*

Gods children have cauſe to be humbled for their beſt actions

Again, is it ſo, that howſoever Gods children have many good things in them, as they be regenerate, yet as they are ſtill in part fleſh, there is in that fleſh of theirs no good thing to be found. Surely then, Gods children muſt know they have cauſe to be humbled for their beſt actions: for why? their fleſh will be meddling in their beſt works, and the beſt things they do, come in part from the fleſh: and ſo far forth as any thing done by Gods children comes from the fleſh, it favours of the fleſh, and it is evil, and they have cauſe to be humbled for it; yea, on the ground of doctrine now delivered, Gods children muſt further learn to keep their hearts and minds exerciſed on good things, and they muſt look that they exerciſe that grace and that holineſſe that is in them: “for indeed, the heart and mind of man is ever ſtirring and working; and if grace be not keep on foot, and ſtirring, and in exerciſe, the fleſh will be ſtirring and working, and there is no good thing in that, and that will certainly bring forth nothing but evil.

*Note.*

And hence it is, no doubt, that Gods children are many times foyled and overcome of temptation to ſinne, becauſe they keep not that grace that is in them, ſtirring, and working, and in exerciſe: for it is either through want of grace, or weakneſſe of grace, or through want of the exerciſe of grace, that men fall into ſin; for, if grace be not ſtirred up and exerciſed, the heart that hath no good thing in it, of it ſelf joyns hands with the Devil, and betrayes men into his hands, and thruſts them on into temptation. This was Davids caſe, and Judahs caſe, Gen. 38. Oh then, learn, whoſoever thou art, to keep that grace that is in thee, ſtirring and in exerciſe, if thou wouldſt not be foyled and overcome of temptation to ſin; thy heart hath no good thing in it of it ſelf; and if that grace that is in it, be not kept ſtirring, and working, and in exerciſe, it will deceive thee, and thruſt thee on into temptation.

Come we now to the ſecond general thing laid before us in this Verſe, the



the confirmation of the *Apoſtles* Propoſition, *That in him, namely, in his fleſh, dwelt no good thing, in thoſe things, For to Will is preſent with me, but I find no means to perform that which is good.* In theſe words the Apoſtle confirms his Propoſition, that in him, that is, in his fleſh, no good thing dwelled, from the effect of ſin dwelling in him, which was the hindring of him in doing of good; as that it ſo hindred him in doing good, as he found no means to perform it: which is amplified by his will to good; as he was regenerate, and howſoever as he was regenerate, he willed good, yet he found no means to perform that which is good. So much in general is comprized in theſe words, *For to Will is preſent with me, but I find no means to perform that which is good.*

*For to will:* the word (*Will*) here ſignifies not that power or faculty of the ſoul that is called Will. And again, it ſignifies not an abſolute act or work of willing, to will abſolutely, nor to will indifferently, nor yet to will evil, but an act of willing good, to will that which is good, namely, to chooſe good, to purpoſe good, and to deſire to do that which is good, as appears plainly by that the *Apoſtle* ſubjoynes, *I find no means to perform that which is good.* As if he had ſaid, To will good, to chooſe good, to purpoſe and to deſire the doing of good, is preſent with me, but I find no means to perform that good. (*Is preſent*) The word *Preſent* ſignifies, is ready, and is at hand, or is not to ſeek. (*With me*) that is, with me *Paul*, as I am regenerate, and renewed by grace: for the *Apoſtle* here ſpeaks of himſelf with that limitation, that with him, as he was regenerate to will. *Good was preſent with me, but I find no means to perform,* or as it is in the Original, *but to perform that which is good I find not.*

The word here rendred (*to perform*) ſignifies to accompliſh, or to perfect; and by the word (*Good*) we are to underſtand that which is truly good. And ſo the *Apoſtles* meaning is, to accompliſh the good I purpoſe and deſire to do, or to perfect good things, even things truly good, as I would do them, and without imperfection. (*I find not*) that is, I find not ſufficient ability and power, I find that I want ability and ſtrength to that purpoſe, my fleſh and corruption that ſtill remains in me hindring of me. Some may ſay, It ſeems then that *Paul* was not regenerate, in that he ſaith, he willed good, but was not able to perform it; for in the regenerate, God works both the will and the deed. *Phil. 2. 13.* ſaith the Apoſtle, *It is God that works in you both the Will and the deed, even of his good pleaſure.*

I answer, That it is true indeed that God works both the will and the deed in the regenerate, whenſoever they do both will good, and perform good it is God that works both; but hence it follows not, that regenerate perſons do alwayes and in every particular act, both will good and do good. No: ſometimes they will and deſire to do good, and either they do it not, or at the leaſt they do it not as it ought to be done: but when they will good and do good, it is God that works both in them: that is the meaning of the Apoſtle: and ſo notwithstanding this, it remains a truth, that the Apoſtle was truly regenerate when he ſpoke thus of himſelf, *To Will is preſent with me, but I find no means to perform that which is good.* And his meaning is, That as he was regenerate, he had a will and deſire to do good, but many times he was hindred, and was not able either to do the good he deſired, or he was not able to do it, as it ought to be done. Thus then briefly conceive we the Apoſtles meaning in theſe words, *For to Will is preſent with me, but I find no means to perform that which is good:* as if he had ſaid,

*For to will, and to chooſe good, to purpoſe good, and to deſire to do that which is ready & at hand, and not to ſeek With me, as I am regenerate and renewed by grace; but through that corruption that ſtill in part abides in me, I am hindred in doing that good, ſo as I find that I want ability and power many times to accompliſh that good I purpoſe and deſire to do, or at leaſt, to perfect good things as I would, and to do them without imperfection, as they ought to be done.*

Fiſt note we hence, how the Apoſtle confirms it, that there was no good thing



thing dwelling in him, that is, in his flesh, and how he knew it so to be, namely thus; he found, that as he was regenerate, there was in him a will to good, a purpose to do good, but yet he was hindred in the doing of it, so as either he did it not at all; or he did it untowardly: by this he knew it, and was well acquainted with it, that in him, namely, in his flesh, there was no good thing abiding. Whence take we notice of it in a word;

*Doctr. 5.*  
Men may know that they have no good thing in themselves.

That men may know that they have no good thing in them, of themselves, and may be acquainted with it, that they have still corruption abiding in them: if they observe how they are hindred in doing good; if men do but mark and observe, and withall consider, how they are either kept back from doing good; or if they do any good thing, how untowardly they do it; they cannot choose but be privy to it, and well acquainted with it, that there is still corruption and sin abiding in them, and that their hearts are still in part naught, they cannot but see this and discern it: and doubtlesse, hence it is, that Familists and others are blown up, with a conceit of perfection in themselves, and think that they are come to an absolute perfection of holinesse, because they observe not how they be hindred in doing of good things: they mark not; or at least, consider not, that the best things they do, they do them untowardly; they think, they do good things perfectly and without any fayling at all, and that makes them swell with a conceit of perfection in themselves: if men do but observe and consider how untowardly they do good things, and how many wayes they faile in the doing of them, it will certainly put them out of all conceit of perfection in themselves.

*Use 1.*  
How men may know the naughtinesse of their own hearts.

If then thou that art a child of God, if thou (I say) wouldst see and discern the naughtinesse of thine own heart, and the corruption that still in part abides in it, do but mark and consider how untowardly thou dost good things, with what deadnesse and dulnesse of heart thou dost them. how thy thoughts are distracted and carried aside in the doing of them, how thou dost them not with due respect to Gods glory, but in sinister and by-respects, and the like, and it will bring thee to a sight of the naughtinesse of thine own heart, and make thee to acknowledge that thou hast still in thee a naughty and acorrupt heart: if thou see all thy righteousness to be as filthy clouts, thou wilt then with the holy Prophet acknowledge, *Isai. 64. vers. 6. that thou art unclean*, and that there is still filthinesse and corruption in part abiding in thee; thou wilt then see it and discern it. The point was in patt before handled, therefore I spare further to speak of it.

Now in that the *Apostle* saith, *To will is present with me*, to will and to choose good, to purpose good, and to desire to do that which is good, is ready and at hand, and not to seek with me, as I am regenerate and renewed by grace; we are given to understand,

*Doctr. 6.*  
To will good is ready, and at hand, with Gods children, they be regenerate.

That Gods children, and such as are truly regenerate, have power, not of themselves, but through grace, to will that which is truly good, yea, it follows from hence, that *G O D S* children have in them a ready purpose of heart, and a ready desire to do good things, and to please God in all things; to will good, is ready and at hand with Gods children, as they be regenerate, and renewed by the Spirit of grace. And touching this, for the evidence and truth of it, we have not onely the example of the *Apostle* in this place, but the examples of other Saints and Children of God, as of *David*, when he saith of himself, *Psal. 40. 8. I desired to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy Law is within my heart.* As if he had said, My heart is inclined, and I have a ready will, purpose and desire in me to do thy will, O my God.

Thus good *Josua*, *Josh. 24. 15.* he saith, *I and my house will serve the Lord:* I am resolved, and I have a ready will and purpose within me to serve the Lord. Thus much Christ affirms of his Disciples. *Matth. 26. 41. The Spirit*, saith he *is ready indeed, but the flesh is weak.* I see in you a readinesse of Spirit, there is in you a ready will to good, but the flesh is weak. And many other examples might



might be brought to this purpoſe, confirming this truth, that Gods children have in them a power not of themſelves, but through grace, to will and to chooſe that which is truly good, yea, as they are regenerate, they have in them a ready purpoſe of heart, and a ready deſire to do good things: and the reaſon is this.

Because as they are regenerate, and as they have grace in them, they are altered and changed, and of unfit and unwilling, they are made apt and fit, willing and ready to think, will, affect, and do good things, and ſo through that grace that is in them, they have power to will, and to chooſe good, yea, as they are regenerate, they have a ready purpoſe of heart, and a ready deſire to good things.

Reason.

But haply here ſome will move this queſtion: Have Gods children at all times a will to good, and is it ever preſent with them to will that which is truly good, and alwayes in the like meaſure?

Queſt.

To this I answer, That though Gods children have in them at all times a power, through grace, to will that which is good, yet ſometimes they do not will this or that particular good actually, neither do they will this or that particular good, which haply they will alwayes actually in the like meaſure; but ſometimes weakly, and ſometimes more ſtrongly, as in time of tryal, and time of temptation, they do not haply will this or that particular good actually, or if they will it, yet not in the like meaſure as at other times. But yet this ſtill remains a truth, that through that grace that is in them, they have power to will that which is truly good, and as they are regenerate, and in general they have in them a ready purpoſe, and a ready deſire to do good things. Now then for the uſe of this: Firſt,

Anſw.

This ſerves as a ground of tryal to every one of us, whether we be Gods children, and truly regenerate or no. Wouldſt thou know whether thou be a child of God or no? Examine thy ſelf by this note: Doſt thou finde that thou art enabled by grace to will that which is truly good? Haſt thou in thee a ready purpoſe, and a ready deſire to do good things? Doſt thou no ſooner hear of any good duty required of thee, but thine heart answers, I will do it, and to will to do it is preſent with me? Certainly that is an infallible evidence that thou art a childe of God. But on the other ſide, if thou finde that when good duties are required at thine hand, and thou art called on to do good things, as to hear the Word of God, to pray, to ſanctifie the Sabbath, and ſuch like, thou art averſe and repugnant to theſe things, and thine heart and mind goes againſt theſe things, thou haſt no mind to them; deceive not thy ſelf, thou art not yet in the ſtate of regeneration, no, thou art yet in the ſtate of nature, and till thine heart be changed, thou canſt have no comfort in that ſtate.

Uſe 1.

Trial whether we be Gods children, and truly regenerate.

Again, for a ſecond uſe, is it ſo, that Gods children, and ſuch as are truly regenerate, have in them power, through grace, to will that which is truly good, and as they are regenerate, they have in them a ready purpoſe of heart, and a ready deſire to do good things? Then here is a ground of comfort for thee, whoſoever thou art that findeſt in thee, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 2 Cor. 8. 11, 12. *a willing mind*, and a readineſſe to will good things. Doſt thou find in thee a ready purpoſe of heart, and a ready deſire to do the will of God? and doſt thou find that (the Lord calling on thee, to do this or that good duty) thine heart answers readily, I will do it, I purpoſe to do it, I deſire in my heart to do it? Comfort thy ſelf; that is a ſure evidence of thy regeneration, and that thou haſt true grace in thine heart: for as it is a note of a wicked man, willingly to purpoſe to live in any known ſin; ſo is it a note of a child of God, to have a will ready and prepared to do the will of God, and in every thing to pleaſe God. If then it be the ready purpoſe of thine heart, and the ready deſire of thy ſoul, to do good things, and to will good things is preſent with thee, and thou findeſt in thee an heart ready and prepared to do good things, thou ſetteſt thy ſelf purpoſely to do

Uſe 2.

Comfort for ſuch as find in themſelves a readineſſe to will good things.



them, using carefully all good means to that end, that is a sure testimony that thou art regenerate, a child of God, and in the state of grace and salvation.

Now from this that the Apostle saith, *To will is present with me, but to perform I find not.* His meaning being this, as we shewed, that to will good, to purpose good, to desire to do good, was ready and at hand with him, as he was regenerate, but yet through corruption still abiding in him, he found that he wanted ability many times either to accomplish the good he desired to do, or if he did any good thing, that he was not able to do it perfectly, as it ought to be done. Hence two things offer themselves : I will speak of them in order. First, this hence we are given to understand :

*Doct. 7.*  
Gods children  
many times  
want ability  
to do particu-  
lar good  
things, which  
they desire to  
do.

That howsoever to will good, to purpose good, to desire to do good, be ready at hand, and present to Gods children, as they be regenerate, yet many times, through that corruption that still abides in them, they want ability to do good, they are not able to do the good things they purpose and desire to do ; to do this or that particular good, is many times to seek with the best of Gods children, though to will that good, be present with them, and that by reason of that corruption that still abides in them.

And to make this further manifest, that Text is cleer to this purpose, *Matth. 26. 41.* where Christ saith of his Disciples, *The Spirit is ready, but the flesh is weak.* As if he had said, There is in you a readinesse of Spirit, there is in you a ready will and purpose to watch with me, but through the weaknesse of your flesh, you are not able to do that good you would ; you cannot do that good you purpose and desire to do. And hence it was (no doubt) that *David, Psal. 119. 106.* bound himself with an Oath to keep the righteous Judgements of the Lord, *I have sworn, and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgements.* If *David* had found no weaknesse, no mistrust, nor doubtfulness in himself, he needed not so straightly to have bound himself : but finding this, that howsoever he had in him, as he was regenerate, a will to good, a purpose and desire to do good things, yet through the corruption of his nature still abiding in him in part, there was in him a weaknesse and want of ability to do good things : he therefore did provoke and stir up himself to a greater care, by an Oath and solemne Covenant made with God.

In *David's* example we see, how it is with the best of Gods children, that howsoever to will good, to purpose good, to desire to do good things, is ready, and at hand, and present with them, as they be regenerate, yet many times through that corruption that still abides in them, they want ability to do good, they are not able to do the good things they purpose and desire to do ; and one reason of it is given by the *Apostle, Gal. 5. 17.*

*Reasons. 1.*

*The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh : and these two are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the same things that ye would.* The flesh is not onely remaining in Gods children, but it is also stirring in them, and lusting, and rebelling against the Spirit, and against that grace that is in them. And hence it is that many times they are hindered, and cannot do the good things they would.

Again, a second reason of it is this : It is God that works in his children both the will and deed, *Philip. 2. 13.* It is he that makes them both to will good, and to do good, as Christ saith, *Joh. 15. 5.* Without him true Believers can do nothing that is good. And hence it was, that *David 1 Chron. 29. 14.* broke out into magnifying and praising the Name of the Lord, for that the Lord had not onely made him and his people, willing to offer, but had also enabled them to offer indeed. *Who am I (saith he) and what is my people, that we should be able to offer willingly after this sort ? for all things come of thee, and of thine own hand have we given thee.*

Now God sometimes is pleased to with-hold his assisting grace from his children, even that grace that should assist them in doing of good : and thence also it is, that they are not able many times to do the good things they purpose and



and desire to do, and though to will be present with them, yet to do this or that particular good, is many times to seek with them, through that corruption that still abides in them, they are hindered, and they are not able to do it: and thus it is even with the best of Gods children. And this for the Use,

First, discovers and makes known to us that it is an easier matter to purpose, then to practise good things. To will good, is present to Gods children, as they be regenerate: but to do this or that particular good, is many times to seek with them, through that corruption that still abides in them: and therefore if we find our selves enabled by grace to will that which is truly good, if we find in us at any time a purpose and desire of doing any good thing, we must not presume of our own wisdom, will and strength for the doing of it, but we must desire further strength from God to enable us to the performance of it: it is Gods grace that we are able to will good, and to purpose and desire to do good truly; but yet there is a further grace required for the doing of that good; and if that grace be not likewise given, we shall never do it. No, when we have done one good thing, we cannot do a second, but by a new supply of grace. When therefore we find our hearts disposed to good things, as *Dauids heart was to pray*, 2 Sam. 7. 27. when our hearts are prepared and ready to do any good thing, we may not undertake the doing of it otherwise then thus, even with a denial of all power in our selves, and with earnest craving the presence of Gods Spirit and Grace, without which we cannot purpose, much lesse perform any thing that is truly good: and in every good thing we do, we must give all glory to God: for he it is that makes us able both to will and to do good things.

*Use 1.*  
It is an easier matter to purpose, then to practise good things.

Again, for a second use, is it so, that Gods children are not able many times to do the good things they purpose and desire to do? and though to will good, be present with them, yet to do this or that particular good, is many times to seek with them, through the corruption that still abides in them: they are like to prisoners that have escaped out of prison, who would go twenty miles in an hour, but are not able to go one mile. Is it thus with the best of Gods children? Then be not thou, whosoever thou art, too much dejected and cast down, that findest in thy self a purpose and a desire to do good things, and yet wisthal findest thy self unable to perform them.

*Use 2.*  
Comfort for such as find in themselves a purpose to do good things, and yet find themselves unable to perform them.

For example: Art thou able to say in truth of heart, I would be more humbled for my sins, I would fain weep and shed tears for my sins, but mine heart is hard and I cannot do it; I would fain pray with more feeling and more fervency, I would hear the Word with more cheerfulness and delight: but, alas, I find in my self a deadness and dullness, and I cannot do these good things as I would? is it thus with thee? Comfort thy self, thy case is no other then the case of all Gods children: thus it hath been with them, and thus it will be with the best of Gods children. Look that thy purpose and desire after these good things, be in truth, and unfained, and that thou be careful to cherish it, striving against thy hardness, deadness, and dullness of heart, and using all good means that may bring that purpose and desire of thine into act; and then though thou be not able to bring it forth into act, yet know to thy comfort, it is no otherwise with thee, then with the dearest of Gods Children; thy case and theirs is alike: the Lord is pleased to try thee whether thou wilt continue striving against thy corruption or no. And if thou so do, he will at length give thee power against it; and in the mean time assure thy self, he accepts thy will for the deed, as he doth at the hands of his Children: and let that be thy comfort.

Now in the second thing offered from hence, that the *Apostle* saith, *To will good, to purpose good, is present with me, but through that corruption that still abides in me*, I find that I want ability either to accomplish the good I desire to do, or if I do any good thing, that I am not able to do it perfectly as I ought. Hence we are taught,

*Doctr. 8.*  
Gods children do not good things perfectly.

That the good things Gods Children do, they do them not perfectly; it is not possible for any Child of God to do any good so perfectly, as that there should



should be no evil found in his action: no, no; as saith the Prophet *Isaiah*, *Isai. 64. 6. All our righteousnesses are as filthy clouts.* The best actions Gods children do, are polluted and defiled, and there is sin cleaving to them, and it must needs be so: for why?

*Reason.*

Gods Children are not perfectly renewed by grace; there is still corruption in part abiding in them. Sinful desires are never wholly wanting to them, but they have them still in part in them: and therefore they cannot perform good things perfectly, but there must needs be some want, and some defect cleaving to the best of their actions, *Jonah 4. 2.* It is said, that *Jonah prayed unto the Lord.* But if we read the place, we shall find, that he did it marvellous untowardly; it was rather a quarrelling with God, then a praying unto him. So indeed the good things that Gods Children do, they do them exceeding untowardly, and they cannot possibly do good things perfectly.

*Object.*

*Object.* The works of God are perfect, good things done by Gods children are the works of God; therefore they are perfect.

*Answer.*

Answer, such works as be the works of God alone, are most perfect: but such works as are works both of God and man, of which sort are good things done by Gods Children, they are not perfect, because they come from God indeed, but yet through the sinful mind and will of man, and they partake of the corruption of man, and are thereby defiled: as pure water running thorow a filthy Channel, is polluted and made foul. And so it is still a certain truth, that the good things Gods Children do, they do them not perfectly, but there is evil and sin cleaving to the best of their actions.

*Use 1.*

That opinion, that Gods children may perfectly fulfil the Law of God, confuted.

Now this for the use of it, first, meets with an error of the Papists, who hold and teach, that the works of the regenerate are perfectly good, that regenerate persons may perfectly fulfil the Law of God in time of this life; and though sometimes they sin, yet it is but venially, not mortally; not against, but besides the Law of God. This is an error plainly convinced by the Doctrine now delivered: and indeed it is a transgression of the Law of God, not only to do evil but to fail in the doing of good, and it deserves the curse of God, and from such fayling non are freed, no not the best of Gods Children: And therefore, it is erroneous and false, to say that the regenerate may perfectly fulfil the Law of God in time of this life.

*Use 2.*

We must take heed of pride, when we have either spoken or done any good thing.

Again, is it so, that the good things Gods Children do, they do them not perfectly, but there is sin cleaving to the best of their actions? Then we must take heed, that when we have either spoken well, or done well, we be not proud of it; there is imperfection cleaves to our best speeches and best actions, yea, matter enough to condemn us, if God be not gracious to us, in Christ: and therefore take we heed of pride and swelling, in regard of any good things said or done by us.

*Use 3.*

We are not to be discouraged, because of some failings that cleave to our good actions.

Last of all, Is it so, that the good things Gods Children do, they do them not perfectly, but sin cleaves to the best of their actions? Then be not thou, whosoever thou art, discouraged, because some failing and some imperfection cleaves to the good things done by thee. Labour thou to do good things according to knowledg, in soundnesse of judgment, and truth of heart, and use thy best care and endeavour to do them as they ought to be done; and then, though thou do them weakly and imperfectly, yet be not thereupon discouraged and utterly cast down: remember that there be wants and imperfections cleaving to the best actions that the dearest of Gods children do perform; be thou humbled for thy failing, and crave pardon for it in and through Christ, and strive to do better, and assure thy self, the Lord will never lay it to thy charge: no, no; the Lord seeing thee do good things willingly, though weakly, he will spare thee, as a Father spareth his own Son that serves him: a Father, finding in his child a good will and desire to please him, takes that which his child doth, in good part, and is content with it, though it be done marvellous weakly, and though the thing done be very faulty; so deales the Lord with his Children.



## VERS. 19.

*For I do not the good thing which I would, but the evil which I would not, that do I.*



IN this Verse our *Apostle* confirms that which he said in the Verse before; That though to will was present with him, yet to perform good he found not; by an argument from the effect negatively, and he denies the effect to be answerable to his will and desire, touching that which is truly good, that indeed his will was to do good, but he did it not: and therefore he found in himself a want of ability to perform the good he willed, and purposed, and de-

sired to do. So he reasons: *to will is present with me, but I find no means to perform that which is good: for (saith he) I do not the good thing which I would.* And that is further amplified by the contrary effect in respect of evil: the *Apostle* affirms on the contrary, that the evil which he would not do, that he did, *But the evil which I would not, that do I.* And so we have the dependance of this Verse, on the foregoing matter, and the summe and substance of it.

The words of this Verse need not much to be stood on, touching the sense of them, we had the same in effect, Verse 15. where the *Apostle* saith, *What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.* I will briefly run them over. *For I do not the good thing which I would.* By good thing, we are to understand, that which is spiritually and truly good, and pleasing to God: and the Word here rendred (*do*) signifies to act, effect and bring forth *which I would*; that is, which I, as I am regenerate, would act and do, and which I purpose and earnestly desire to do. *But the evil which I would not.* By evil is here meant the contrary to the good before spoken of, namely, the *evil of sin*, and that is repugnant and contrary to the Law of God, and displeasing to God. *Which I would not*, that is, as before I shewed, which I, as I am regenerate, would not do, that I do, that I act and do, and bring forth: yet this (as heretofore I said) is not to be understood as if the *Apostle* had been forced to do evil against his will, but that he consented not to it with his whole will, he being now regenerate, the evil he now did, was not with the full and whole consent of his will.

Interpretation

And again, we must know, that the *Apostle* saying, *he did not the good thing which he would have done*, we are to understand it, that so it was with him many times, not alwayes, that many times he did it not; and on the other side, in saying, *The evil which he would not, that he did*, we are likewise to conceive it, that so it was with him many times, not alwayes:

Thus then take we up the *Apostles* meaning in the words of this Verse, as if he had said, For the good thing, even that thing that is truly good and pleasing to God, which I, as I am regenerate, would act and do, and which I purpose and earnestly desire to do, many times I do not, I act not, I effect it not, I bring it not forth: but on the other side, the evil that is repugnant, and contrary to the Law of God, and displeasing to God, which as I am regenerate, I would not do, that many times I act, and bring forth, and that many times I do. We shall stand the lesse while on this Verse, because we had it in substance before, Verse 15. The *Apostle* here repeats that in substance, which there he laid down, as likewise in Verse 20. he repeats that which he had Verse 16, 17.

Now this the *Apostle* did not for want of matter; he was full of heavenly matter, neither was it idly and unprofitably done, but to good purpose, no doubt, to let us understand, that the things he here puts down touching the spiritual Combat, are things of weight and importance, and needful to be known, and that we cannot be too well acquainted with them: and again, that we are dull of hearing, and dull of conceiving these heavenly matters, and do not sufficiently mark and consider them: and therefore the *Apostle* is pleased to repeat them,



them, and to urge and presse them on us again; and indeed, repetitions (which shall be the point I will hence note in the first place) I say,

**Doct. 1.**  
Repetitions in the Scripture, are to good use and purpose.

Repetitions in Scripture are not idle and vain, they are not fruitlesse, unprofitable and to no purpose; but they are to very good purpose, they serve to teach us the infallible and certain truth of things repeated; doubling of things in Scripture is for more certainty, and more plainnesse. *Gen. 41. 32. Joseph saith, The Dream was doubled; because the thing was established by God. And Phil. 3. 1. the Apostle saith, It grieved not him to write the same things to them. And he saith, Heb. 2. 1. To them it was a sure thing.*

And again, repeating and doubling of things in Scripture, serves to put us in mind, that we are more carefully to mark and observe, and to mind and remember the things repeated. *Heb. 2. 1. it is said, We ought diligently to give heed to the things which we have already heard; even when they are repeated, and when we hear them again, And there is reason for it:*

**Reason.**

For if the Lord have a mouth to speak, we must have an ear to hear, a mind to attend, and an heart to yeeld to that which is spoken. And if the Lord double his speech, we must double our attention, and we must double our care to mark and observe, and mind and remember the thing that is doubled, and accordingly make use of it.

**Use. 1.**  
Just reproof of many, who regard not things doubled and trebled in Scripture.

And this serves for the just reproof of many in the World: Many there be that are defective, and come short of their duty in this respect; they have little or no regard of that the Lord speaks to them in his Word, no, though the Lord double, yea, treble his speech, and often urge and presse the same thing on them, especially in matter of threatning and denouncing of Judgment, the Lord in his Word doubling his threats of Judgment against sin, who almost regards it according to that manner of delivery? who is it almost that doubles his attention, and his care to be bettered by it accordingly? To instance in some particulars, *1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. the Apostle saith, The unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdome of God. And he reckons up particulars, Neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Wantons, nor Buggers, nor Theeves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Raylers, nor Extortioners shall inherit the Kingdome of God. And he repeats the same again, Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. And again, Ephes. 5. 5. No Whoremonger, neither unclean person, nor Covetous person which is an Idolater, hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for, for such things cometh the Wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.*

Now, where is that Whoremonger, that Filthy person, that Drunkard, that according to this doubled threatning, doubles his regard of it, and his care to be bettered by it to this reformation? where is almost such an one to be found? Nay, do not many Filthy persons, and Drunkards, and such like, even blunt the edge of Gods threatnings on the hardnesse of their hearts? Well, think on it, whosoever thou art: Hath the Lord spoken a thing, and shall not he do it? Hath he threatned Judgments against thee for thy sin, and that again and again, and shall not he be as good as his word? Yes, assuredly; Unlesse thou answer the Lord in doubling his threatnings by a sound and through reformation, he will bring his threatned Judgments on thee; yea, know it for a truth, thou that goest on in thy known sins, notwithstanding the Lord doubles his threats of Judgment against thee, either in his written Word, or in the Ministry of his Word, the Lord directing his Ministers often to hit upon the sin, and justly to denounce the Judgments of God against thee for the same, thou dost in an high degree resist the Spirit of God, *Act. 7. 51. and as it is, Prov. 1. 25. Thou despisest all the Counsels of God.* And assure thy self, the Lord will deal with thee proportionably: he will certainly double his Plagues and Judgments on thee.

Repetitions in Scripture, or in the Ministry of the Word, are not idle and vain: no, no, they signifie the infallible truth of the things repeated, and that we are more carefully to attend them, and to make use of them: and therefore when



when the Lord doubles his ſpeech in promiſing mercy, in commanding any duty, and eſpecially in threatening Judgment againſt ſin; let us look we answer the Lord, in doubling our attention and care to profit by the ſame: otherwiſe, the Lord will one day certainly require it at our hands, and we ſhall ſmart for it. Now from this Verſe, in that the *Apoſtle* ſaith, that *he did not the good thing which he would*; he would have done good, but he did it not, he points out to us,

That the good which Gods children would do, as they are regenerate, many times they do it not, they do not alwayes perform that good they deſire to do. And again, in that he ſaith, *The good thing which I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that do I*: we might further note,

That Gods children are never ſo given over, as to ſin with the whole will, and with full conſent of will: for when they omit the doing of good, or fail in the doing of any good, they would not ſo do; or when they do evil, they would not do it, they do it not with full conſent of will. But theſe things we have formerly handled; therefore I paſſe by them. And the point I will ſtand on, hence offered, is this; In that the *Apoſtle* ſaith, *I do not the good thing that I would, but the evil that I would not, that do I*. Hence we are given to underſtand,

That Gods children do not only ſometimes omit the doing of good, or fail in the doing of that good which they do, and ſo ſin; but ſometimes they ſin in doing evil: even the beſt of Gods children that live on the face of the earth, ſometimes ſin in doing that which is directly evil, and ſometimes they do that which is directly repugnant and contrary to the rule of Gods Law. Gods children not only ſin by failing in performance of good duties, but ſometimes alſo by evil actions, even by ſuch actions as are ſimply evil in themſelves, and directly contrary to the Law. Thus did the *Apoſtle*, he did evil. And thus we find that *Abraham* ſinned by lying, *Gen. 20. 2*. *Job* by impatience, *Iob. 3*. *Ezechiab* by vain-glory, *2 King. 20. 13*. *Moses* by ſpeaking unadviſedly, *Num. 20. 10*. And ſo many other of Gods dear children have ſinned, by doings ſimply evil in themſelves, and directly contrary to Gods Law: yea, we find that Gods children ſometimes through the ſtrength of their own corruption and violence of temptation, have been overtaken with foul groſſe evils; as *Noah*, *Lot*, *David*, and *Peter*.

Now if any demand why the Lord ſuffers his children ſo to be overtaken?

I answer, For their further humbling, and becauſe the Lord will have his children acquainted with their own weakneſſe, and will give them to ſee that they ſtand in need of his grace continually, yea, though they have gone far in Chriſtianity, yet that they are but men, and ſo may learn wholly to relye on his grace.

Now then, this being a truth, that the beſt of Gods children not only ſin by failing in good duties, but ſometimes alſo by doing that which is directly evil, and contrary to the Law of God, it muſt needs be falſe which the Papists hold, and teach; *That a man may in time of this life be without ſin, and may ſo live, as that he may be altogether void of ſin*. That cannot ſtand with the truth now delivered, but muſt needs be erroneous and falſe.

But they bring for defence of their opinion, the example of *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*, *Luk. 1. 6*. where it is ſaid, that *they were both juſt before God, and walked in all the Commandements and Ordinances of the Lord without reproof*.

Answer. They were indeed juſt before God, that is, juſtified by faith in the ſight of God, and as a fruit of that, they walked blameleſſy before men, they were holy and juſt perſons, yet not free from ſin: for *Zachary*, as one of Gods people, looked for remiſſion of ſins, and ſalvation by Chriſt, Verſe 77.

Again; Is it ſo, that the beſt of Gods children not only ſin by failing in good duties, but ſometimes alſo by doing that which is directly evil? Then the beſt of us have need to be watchful over our own hearts, we are in danger to be overcome of temptation, and occaſions of ſin and doing evil being offered, to be ſometimes

*Doctr. 2:*  
Gods children do not alwayes perform the good they deſire to do.

*Doct. 3.*  
Gods children never ſin with full conſent of will.

*Doct. 4:*  
Gods deareſt children ſometimes ſin, in doing that which is directly evil.

*Queſt.*  
*Anſw.*

*Uſe 1.*  
That opinion of the Papists; that a man may in time of this life be without ſin, confuted.

*Object:*

*Anſw.*

*Uſe 2.*  
The beſt of Gods children have need to watch over their own hearts;

ſometimes



sometimes overcarried by corruption that still abides in us, to the doing of it. And if the corruption of nature was so strong in *Paul*, and other of Gods children, as that sometimes they were over-carried by it, not only by failing in good duties, but by the doing of evil: Oh what need have we then to be watchful over our selves, we having not so great a measure of grace as they had! yea, the best of us have cause every day to be humbled for our sins, and every day to renew our repentance, and to say, Lord, forgive us our sins: yea, though we be assured of our own salvation, and know nothing by our selves, though we be not guilty of any grosse sin, yet with *David* we have need to pray, *Lord, cleanse us from our secret faults, Psal. 19. 12.* We do many things that are directly evil, and repugnant to the Law of God, and we have cause to be humbled not onely for our failings, but for our sins also that are directly against the Law of God, and are in themselves transgressions of Gods Law.

## V E R S. 20.

*Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but the sin that dwelleth in me.*

**I**N this Verse our *Apostle* further confirms that Proposition, that howsoever, as he was regenerate, he willed good, yet he was not able to perform it, from the cause of hinderance. He here points out the true and right cause of it, whence it was that he was hindered in doing of good, that he could not do it, namely, his own in-dwelling corruption; yea, he saith, that it was from his own in-dwelling corruption, that he did the evil that he would not have done. And this Verse contains in it an inference brought in, on that he said Verse before, that *the evil he would not do, that he did.* Thereupon the *Apostle* concludes, that it was not he that did the evil. *If (saith he) I do that I would not, it is not I that do it.* And he amplifies that by a note of difference touching himself, in regard of his present condition compared with his former, that howsoever in former times it was he that did it, yet now it was no more he that did the evil that was done by him. *If I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it.* And then he further shewes; what it was that did it, namely, his own in-dwelling corruption: but, saith he, *the sin that dwelleth in me, that doth it.*

The *Apostle* here, as I said, repeats the self-same thing he delivered Verse 16, 17. and in the very same words: and therefore we need not stand on the opening of them, but only call to mind and remember how they have been formerly expounded. And thus, as you may remember, we expounded them; and thus they are to be conceived, as if the *Apostle* had said,

Interpretation

*Now then, if I do that evil which I would not do, it is no longer I as I am regenerate, and so far forth as I am regenerate, that do that evil, but the sinful corruption that still in part remains in me, and hath a powerful and working presence in me, even forcibly crossing the motions of the Spirit in me, and baling and pulling me to evil, that is it that doth the evil that is done.*

How the Will of man is free.

Now this Verse being but a repetition of that which was before delivered, I will passe by things formerly handled, and only speak of such things as may hence be further gathered. The Papists, but to point at a note of theirs on these two Verses 19, 20. have this annotation: say they, That which the *Apostle* here speaks of himself, makes nothing against Free-will, but plainly proves it: and how so? Why (say they) because the proper act of the will, namely, to will or nill, to consent or dissent, is ever free in it self, as here we may see in the *Apostle*, though the operation may be hindered by some external force: yea, (say they) in that the *Apostle* saith, *If I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it,* it doth most evidently prove Free-will: that is their note on this place.

To this I answer, It is true indeed, that the act of the will, namely, to will or



nill, to conſent or diſſent, is ever free : but how ? Surely thus ; in the unregenerate it is free from coaction and compulſion, but not from a neceſſity alwayes of willing that which is evil, and in the regenerate, of which ſtate the Apoſtle here ſpeaks in his own perſon, the will is reformed by grace, and made free to will that which is truly good, as Chriſt ſaith *Joh. 8. 36.* *If the Son make you free, then ye ſhall be free indeed.* And ſo this place makes nothing for the proof of the natural ſtrength and power of the will to that which is good, that the will of man hath a power in it ſelf, and by it ſelf to will that which is good, either in the ſtate of Nature or Grace, which is the point in queſtion between us and the Papiſts. No, this place ſhews plainly, that the will regenerate, is onely by grace enabled to will that which is good, and that the will hath power not in it ſelf, or by it ſelf, but by grace to will good, and to nill evil, and that onely in part, and not perfectly. So much theſe two verſes will afford to us touching freedom of will, and no more.

I proceed : *If I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but the ſin that dwelleth in me.* The Apoſtle ſtill (which likewiſe I will note in a word) calls concupiſcence that remained in him, *Sin*, and he gives to it the name of *Sin*. Yea, ſay the Papiſts, it is called ſin, but not properly and truly, but improperly, either becauſe it is the effect of ſin, as the Writing is called the Hand, becauſe it was written with the hand, or for that it is the cauſe of ſin ; as Gold is called Slothful, becauſe it makes a man ſlothful. A ſilly ſhift ! For concupiſcence may be and indeed is, both the effect of ſin, the cauſe of ſin, and ſin alſo truly and properly in divers reſpects.

Concupiſcence is both the effect of ſin, the cauſe of ſin, and ſin alſo truly and properly.

In reſpect of the fall of *Adam*, it is the effect of ſin ; in regard of actual ſins, it is the mother and cauſe of ſin ; and it is alſo in it ſelf truly and properly ſin, becauſe it is not agreeable to Gods Law, but directly contrary to it, and ſhould not have been in man, if man had kept his ſtate of Innocency, and had not broken the Law of God. And as one ſaith well, What can be more abſurd, then to deny that to be ſin properly, that is contrary to God to his Spirit, and to the Law of God ? Therefore this is but a poor ſhift of the Papiſts, to ſay, that Concupiſcence is the effect of ſin, or cauſe of ſin, and therefore not properly ſin. I leave them.

In the next place obſerve we, the Apoſtle blames his own corruption, as the root and cauſe of the evil he did unwillingly ; he layes the fault and blame where it ought to lye, namely, on his own in-dwelling corruption, that he did the evil he would not have done : ſaith he, *It is not I, but the ſin that dwelleth in me, that doth it.*

And indeed thus it ought to be with us : We are to lay the fault of every evil thing we do, on the rottenneſſe and corruption of our own hearts, and we are to blame that as the true and proper cauſe of that evil : for why ? as it is *Jam. 1. 14.* *Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own concupiſcence, and is enticed.* It is a mans own concupiſcence, and the corruption of his own heart, that drawes every man to ſin, and were there not corruption of nature ſtill in part abiding in Gods children, the devil could never faſten any temptation on them, neither could the world nor thing in the world draw them on any ſin.

Our own corruption is the true proper cauſe of every evil thing we do.

The Devil ſet on Chriſt and tempted him, but in vain : for *he found nought in him, Joh. 14. 30.* And ſo, if Gods children were altogether without corruption, the Devil could not force any temptation on them, and they ſhould never ſin at all : and therefore we are to lay the fault of every evil thing we do, on the corruption of our own hearts, and blame that as the true and proper cauſe of it. Lay not the fault of that evil thou doſt, on any thing out of thy ſelf as the cauſe of it. For example ; thou being brought into poverty, or into ſome trouble, it may be, thou falteſt by indirect means to help thy ſelf ; thou betrayeſt the good cauſe thou haſt in hand, if thou ſo do ; lay not the fault of that evil thou doſt, on thy poverty, or on the extreme hard dealing of men. No ; no ; thy poverty, and the



Gen 20. 2, 11.

the extreme dealing of men, may be an occasion of that evil thou dost, but certainly, the cause of it is in thy self, even in thine own bosome, the corruption of thine own heart. It was not *the want of the fear of God in the place that caused Abraham to lye*, Gen. 20. 2. That indeed was the occasion of his lying; but the cause of it was his own thought, his own doubting & fear, arising from the corruption of his own heart, as appears plainly, *Vers. 11. Saith ABRAHAM, I thought this surely, The fear of God is not in this place, and they will slay me for my Wives sake.*

We must learn then, when we do any evil, not to blame any thing out of our selves, but to lay the fault where it ought to lye, namely, on the naughtinesse of our own hearts, as the true and proper cause of it, and we are to be humbled for that, as for the evil it self; that is our duty. I only point at it in a word, because we spake of it at large, *Vers. 5.*

Now lastly, in that the *Apostle* useth this phrase, *Sin that dwelleth in me*, he gives us to understand,

The corruption of nature is a different thing from the powers of the soul.

That the corruption of nature is a different thing from the powers of the soul: for we know that the dweller differs, and is really distinguished from the house where he dwells: and so the corruption of nature dwelling in us, it must needs be conceived to be a real distinct thing from the soul, and from the powers and faculties of it; and it is not a corruption of the substance of the soul; for then the soul could not be immortal, if the substance of it were corrupted, neither could Christ have taken on him mans Nature, without sin: but the corruption of Nature is a thing that dwells and abides in the soul, and a thing that cleaves to the faculties of it, and to the affections of the heart, and it is such a thing as may be removed from the soul by the powerful work of Gods Spirit. And hence it is called an evil that compasseth us about. *Heb. 12. 1. Cast away every thing that presseth down, & the sin that hangeth so fast on, or, doth so easily compass about, for so the word signifies.* And those exhortations that are frequent in the Scripture, *Cast, or Put off the old man*, do give us to understand as much, That the corruption of Nature is not a corruption of the substance of the soul, but a real distinct thing from the soul, and a thing that cleaves to the faculties of it, and to the affections of the heart, and a thing that may be severed from the soul by the powerful work of Gods Spirit. And this for the use of it,

Use 1.

Regeneration doth not abolish any faculty of the soul or any affection of the heart, but it only takes away the filthinesse of them.

Teacheth us, that regeneration doth not abolish any faculty of the soul, nor any natural affection of the heart, but it only takes away the filthinesse and corruption of them, even that corruption that dwells in the soul and cleaves to the faculties and powers of it; and then indeed is a man truly regenerate, when that corruption that is naturally in the powers of his soul, and in the affections of his heart, is removed: And a man may know that he is regenerate, by this, as by a special note; If so be a man find the affections of his heart, especially the chief and ruling affections of it, still as strong and as powerful in him as ever they were, and yet the corruption of them in a good measure removed and taken away, then he is truly regenerate. For example; Dost thou find thy natural affection of joy, of delight, and rejoycing, as strong and as powerful in thee as ever it was, and that the sinfulness and corruption of that affection is removed? Dost thou find now, that thou canst as heartily rejoyce and delight thy self as ever thou couldst, not in sin and outward things, not in carnal pleasure, in Drunkenness, in Good-fellowship and merry meetings and such like, but in the love and favour of God in Christ, in obedience to his will, in the duties of his worship, in hearing the Word, in Prayer, and such like, and it is now the joy of thine heart to be exercised in holy things? Surely, that is a special evidence and testimony that thou art truly regenerate, and that the Spirit of God hath wrought powerfully in thee.

So for the affection of anger: Dost thou find that affection as strong in thee as ever it was, and yet the sinfulness of it removed? Dost thou find that now thine anger is stirred up not on every trifling occasion, nor expressed for meer private



private causes concerning thine own person, but on weighty and great causes, the manifest offence of God, and that it is kindled in thee through desire to maintain the glory of God, and out of a love of virtue and justice, and directed against sin, and not the person of the sinner? Surely, then thou mayst thereupon conclude to the comfort of thine own soul, that thou art truly regenerate; thy affection still remains, but the corruption of it is in some good measure removed and taken away, and so we may try our selves in other affections: and let us remember this, that the corruption of nature is not a corruption of the substance of the soul, but a real distinct thing from the soul, a thing that cleaves to the faculties of the soul, and the affections of the heart, and may be severed from the soul, by the powerful work of Gods Spirit; and so Regeneration doth not abolish any faculty of the soul, nor any affection of the heart, but onely takes away the filthinesse and corruption that cleaves to them, and then indeed we are truly regenerate, when the affections of our hearts remain in full force and strength, and the sinfulness of them is removed.

## VERS. 21.

*I find then by the Law (or this Law: for so the words are read) that When I would do good, evil is present with me.*



**I**N this Verse our *Apostle* further strengthens his foregoing Proposition, that though to will good was present with him, as he was regenerate, yet to perform good he wanted power; by this that when he would have done good, he was hindered by evil, that was ready and at hand, and stood up in his way. And this Verse contains another conclusion, inferred on the foregoing matter: and here the *Apostle* further concludes, that he being willing to do good, as he

was regenerate, there was as it were, a Law laid on him to the contrary, & he was as it were enjoined to the contrary, and he was under such a condition, as he could not do that good: and he makes known what that Law was, namely, *evil that was present with him*: yea, he amplifies this from his own experience, that he found it so in his own experience. *I find*, saith he, *when I would do good there is a Law, or this Law, to the contrary, even evil present with me*: and that hinders me that I cannot do it. That is the general drift and purpose of the *Apostle* in this Verse. *I find then a Law*. *I find* (saith the *Apostle*) that is, Mine own experience teacheth me, and I am able to speak out of mine own experience: *I find it so in mine own experience*: *When I would do good* (for those words in the right order of the sentence are the next, and so the next to be expounded) and the meaning of them is this: When I, as I am regenerate, would do that which is truly good, a Law (or this Law.) The word *Law* is here diversly taken by divers Interpreters; some take it in the good part, for the Law of God, others in the evil part, for the Law of sin and corruption. I will not trouble you with variety of Interpretations, but give you that meaning of it which I conceive to be most agreeable to the Context; and as I take it, the word (*Law*) is here put to signify a strong and forcible power, even such a power as hath in it the force and strength of a Law, that is, a commanding, a controlling, and a binding power.

Interpretation

And that the word *Law* in this place, is thus to be taken, may plainly appear by the use of it, *Vers. 23.* where the *Apostle* speaks of the *Law of the members*; and the *Law of the mind*, leading captive to the *Law of sin*: meaning the power of sin in the mind, and the power of grace in the mind. And the *Apostle* here puts it down indefinitely without any addition, *τὸν νόμον, a Law, this Law*, and not the Law of the flesh, of sin, of death; because he presently subjoynes what law he meant, namely, the evil that was present with him. *Evil* (saith he) *is present with me*. And by *evil* here, we are to understand evil motions, lusts, and



and desires arising from the corruption of nature; and those were present with the Apostle, that is, they were ready and at hand, to crosse and to hinder the good purposes and desires of his heart. Thus then, as I take it, we are to understand the Apostle in the words of this verse, as if he had said,

*I find then in my own experience, that thus it is with me; when I, as I am regenerate, would do that which is truly good, then there is a strong and forcible power as it were a Law, commanding, and controlling, and binding me to the contrary: I mean, the evil motions, lusts and desires that arise from the corruption that still in part abides in me, which are ready and at hand to crosse and to hinder the good purposes and desires of my heart: and by them I find my self yoked and hindered in the doing of good.*

Here first observe we, that the Apostle doth not barely affirm this, that when he would do good, evil as a Law was present with him; but he affirms it as a truth, whereof he had experience: and he saith, he found it so in his own experience; *I find* (saith he) *that when I would do good, evil, as a Law, is present with me.* Hence take we notice of it,

**Doct. 1.**  
Gods children have experience of it, that when they would do good, evil is present with them.

That Gods Children find it in their own experience, that when they would do good, evil, as a Law, is present with them, and hinders them. It is not only so indeed, that when Gods Children purpose good, and set on the doing of good, that the evil is present, and ready at hand, and starts up in them, and hinders them in the doing of it, but they also find it so to be, and Gods Children are able to speak it out of their own experience, and to affirm it as an experienced truth, that they find it so in themselves: for why? It being so, that *the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh*, Gal. 5. 17. and there being evil motions and lusts, stirring in the hearts of Gods Children, they are able to mark and to observe them, and to take notice of them, they being enlightened and having the light of the Lord in them, as it is, *Prov. 20. 27. even that Light that searcheth all the bowels of the belly.* They are able to see and discern that evil that starts up in them, against the good they purpose and desire to do, and they are able to mark and observe it, and so they are able to affirm it out of their own observation and experience, that so it is with them, that when they would do good, there is some evil starts up and hinders them, so as either they do not that good they would, or they do it very untowardly. Thus doubtlesse it is with every Child of God; Every Child of God is able to say, that in some measure he hath experience of it in himself, that when he would do good, evil is present with him and hinders him. And for the use of this,

**Use. 1.**  
Familists confuted.

They vainly boast that they are children of God, that find not this in themselves, and have not experience of it in some measure. They that say, as the Familists and other proud spirits do, that they do good things, and find no hindrance at all in the doing of them, but do them perfectly, they contradict the common experience of all Gods Children: and so it is a plain evidence against them, that they are not in the number of Gods Children: And indeed, if we would approve our selves to be the Children of God, and make it good to the comfort of our own souls, that we are so indeed, we must be able to say, that in some measure we have experience of this in our selves, that when we would do good, evil is present with us, and hinders us, yea, we must be able to say, I find this or that particular evil starting up in me and hindering me, as the *Apostle* saith, *2 Cor. 7. 11.* We must not be ignorant of Satans Enterprizes, that is, of his wiles and fetches, of his secret conveyance of sin into our hearts. So, doubtlesse, we must not be ignorant of the secret working of sin in our selves, we must be able to see and discern the lusts of our hearts that are stirring and working in us, and how they rise up and hinder us when we would do good, and to say out of our own experience, I find that thus and thus I am hindered when I would do good, this or that evil starts up and hinders me, when I am about to do it. So it is with Gods children: yea, the more holy a man is, the more he sees and finds in his own experience, that *when he would do good, evil is present with him.* And so



so it must be with thee, if thou wouldest approve thy self a Child of God : and this is no matter of utter discouragement.

Now further ; In that the *Apostle* saith, *When I would do good, evil, as a Law, is present with me* ; some evil motion, lust or desire is ready and at hand, countermanding and controlling the good I purpose, and desire in my heart : Hence we are given to understand,

That it is the common condition of all Gods Children, that the good motions that come from the Spirit of grace in them, are ever either interrupted or troubled, or they are mingled with some evil motions that arise from that corruption that still abides in them. In the best of Gods Children there is ever some evil, ready and at hand to countermand and controll them, when they purpose and desire to do any good thing, and no sooner do Gods Children purpose and desire to do any good thing, or attempt, or set on the doing of it, but there is some evil motion or lust present and ready to hinder them, presently either pride, or self-love, or Vain-glory, Hypocrisie, or doubt, or fear, or the like, starts up in them and looks them in the face, and controls them, and either hinders them from the doing of that good, or intermingles it self with the doing of it.

And hence, no doubt, it was, that *David*, *Psal. 86. 11.* having prayed that *the Lord would teach him his way, and then he would walk in his Truth*, he presently subjoyns, *Knit or joyn mine heart unto thee, that I may fear thy Name.* As if he had said, Though I be taught of thee, O Lord, and have in me, through thy grace, a will to walk in thy Truth, yet unless thou knit my heart fast unto thee, it is ready to start aside, and by some evil motion or lust to be transported, and to be carried away from thee, and I am in danger to be crossed and hindered in respect of the good I would do ; and therefore, Lord, knit my heart, and tye it fast to thee, and keep it close with thee.

And hence also it was, that *David* seeing the people to offer willingly and with joy, he thus prayed for them, *1 Chron. 29. 18.* *O Lord God (saith he) of Abraham, Izbak and Israel our fathers, keep this for ever in the purpose and the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their hearts unto thee.* *David* knew well, that if the Lord did not keep that good purpose in them, it would be lost and gone, some evil motion or lust would either hinder it, or thrust it quite out of their hearts. And thus indeed it is with the best of Gods Children ; no sooner do they purpose to do any good thing, or set on the doing of it, but there is some motion or lust starts up and looks them in the face, and countermands them, and either hinders them from doing of that good, or intermingles it self with the doing of it : and why ? The reason of it is this,

There is flesh and corruption still in part abiding in the best of Gods Children that live on the face of the earth, and that corruption is not idle, but it is stirring and working in them, and the works and actions of it are one of these, either to fill the mind with wicked thoughts and rebellious inclinations, or else to deface and repress the good motions of the Spirit, and so it comes to passe, that no sooner doth a Child of God conceive a good thought and purpose in his heart, to do any good thing, or set himself to do it, but there is some evil motion or lust starts up, and looks him in the face, and controlls him, and either hinders him from the doing of it, or intermingles it self with that good that he doth.

And this being a truth, in the first place it makes known, that the best works of the regenerate are sinful, and come short of that holiness that ought to be in them : for why ? when a Child of God would do good, there is some evil present with him, and ready at hand, and controlls him, and either hinders him from doing of it, or intermingles it self with the good he doth, and so it must needs be in part sinful : and if the Lord should examine it, according to the rigour of his Law and Justice, it is not able to abide the tryal. Some objections are brought to the contrary ; but of small moment, and therefore I passe by them, and come to another use of this point,

*Doctrine 2.*

The good motions that are in Gods Children, are ever either interrupted, or troubled, or mingled with some evil motions.

*Reason.*

*Use 1.*

The best works of the regenerate, are sinful in part.



*Use. 2.*  
We are to cherish the good thoughts, purposes and desires of our heart, and to labor to bring them forth into act.

Is it so, that no sooner do the best of Gods Children purpose and desire to do any good thing, or set on the doing of it, but there is some evil motion or lust starts up, and looks them in the face, and countermands them, and either hinders them from doing of it, or intermingles in the doing of it? Surely then it concerns us, when any good thought is put into our hearts, and when we have a purpose or desire of doing any good thing, to look to it, to watch over our own hearts, and to make much of that good thought, purpose, and desire, and to cherish it, and to labour by all good means to bring it forth into act. If we do not so, certainly some evil motion or lust starting up in our hearts, will out-face it, and will bear it down. Haply thou hast, in time of hearing the Word, a good motion put into thine heart, and on the hearing of thine own sin reproved, thou hast a purpose to leave it; as to lay aside thy Pride, thy Garishnesse in apparel, thy Drunkennesse, thy Swearing, and such like. Oh, make much of that good purpose, there will be some evil motion or lust ready to countermand it, and when thou comest abroad into the ayr of the World, a thousand to one it will be quenched and gone, and it will vanish and come to nothing; thine own heart will then furnish thee with a thousand excuses to the contrary.

And so it may be, thou hast a purpose to follow thy calling with diligence, to serve God, and to shew thy self religious and one truly fearing God. Well, look to it, and watch thine own heart; thy heart will be ready to suggest one excuse or other to the contrary, as the hardnesse, the impossibility, the trouble and the danger of the matter; as that (forsooth) it will bring losse of favour, of goods, of liberty, or the like: yea, that thou shalt be mocked and pointed at with the finger, and called a Puritane, or the like, as it is, *Prov. 22. 13.* *One Lyon or other will be in the way.* Oh, therefore look to it, when thou hast any good thought, purpose, or desire put into thine heart, of forsaking evil, or doing any good, make much of it, cherish it, and pray to the Lord to keep that good purpose in thine heart, as *David* did, *1 Chron. 29. 18.* No sooner hast thou any good purpose put into thine heart, but some evil motion or lust will be ready to control it: and therefore it concerns thee to look to it, and to cherish it, and to make much of it, and to labour by all good means to bring it forth into act.

VERS. 22. 23.

*For I delight in the Law of God, concerning the inner man.*

*But I see another Law in my members, rebelling against the Law of my mind, and leading me captive unto the Law of sin which is in my members.*



IN these two Verses our *Apostle* layes before us the third degree of the spiritual combat between the flesh and the Spirit, in them that are truly regenerate, still insisting in his own example, namely this, that his delight was in good, touching his inner man, but yet he was led captive by the law of his members to sin: so that here the *Apostle* makes known in his own person, the spiritual Combat more fully and plainly, and in a further degree: for to delight in the Law of God, is more then to will good; and to have the Law of the members rebelling against the Law of the mind, is more then simply to will evil, or to do evil. For the connexion of these Verses with the foregoing matter, we have here a proof of that the *Apostle* said, *Vers. 21.* That *when he would do good, evil, as a law, was present with him*; from this, that the Law of his members rebelled against the Law of his mind, and led him captive unto the law of sin, which was in his members: and that is amplified by his delight in the Law of God, that though he delighted in the Law of God in his inner man, yet the law of his



his members rebelled againſt the Law of his mind : and therefore when he would do good, evil, as a law, was preſent with him. That is the dependance of theſe two Verſes on the Verſe foregoing, and the general matter of them.

Come we to handle them ſeverally. In the two and twentieth Verſe the *Apoſtle* makes known his delight in the Law of God; that he delighted in the Law of God: and leſt he ſhould be miſtaken, he explains himſelf, by limiting his ſpeech to the *Inner man*, that it was in his inner man that he delighted in the Law of God. *I delight* (ſaith he) *in the Law of God, concerning the inner man.* And ſo the matter of this Verſe, is the *Apoſtles* delight in the Law of God, expreſſed with reſtraint of that delight to his *Inner man*.

For *I delight in the Law of God*: that is, I take pleaſure and joy, yea much pleaſure and great joy, I finde much ſweetneſſe and pleaſure: for ſo the word ſignifies in the Original. And by the Law of God we are here to underſtand the Moral Law, which the *Apoſtle*, Verſe 12. ſaid, *was holy, and juſt, and good*: which makes known the good will of God, touching all good duties, both of piety towards God, and of love, and juſtice, and mercy towards men. In this Law the *Apoſtle* took pleaſure and delight, and that in the knowledge and meditation of it, and in the practice of the duties therein required.

*Concerning the Inner man.* Some would have onely the mind and underſtanding to be meant: but indeed that comes too ſhort of the purpoſe and meaning of that Phraſe. By *Inner man*, we are to underſtand the regenerate part throughout, both in ſoul and in body, even whatſoever is (i) her within in the powers of the ſoul, or without in the parts and members of the body, being renewed by grace, and ſo far forth as they be regenerate and renewed. And the regenerate part is thus called the *Inner man*, becauſe Regeneration is chiefly ſeated in the heart, and in the minde, and in the inward powers and faculties of the ſoul, and doth diſſuſe and ſpread it ſelf from thence, to the parts and members of the body: and therefore Chriſt ſaith to the Pharifees, *Luke 17. 2. The Kingdom of God is within you.* And the *Apoſtle* ſaith, *Rom. 2. 29. that true Circumciſion is of the heart, and in the Spirit.* And hence it is called, *The Hid man of the heart* 1 *Pet. 3. 4. Let the hid man of the heart be uncorrupt.* That is one ſpecial reaſon why the regenerate part is called *The Inner man*.

Now then, thus conceive we the *Apoſtles* meaning in the words of this Verſe, as if he had ſaid: *For I, as I am regenerate, and in that part of me that is regenerate and renewed by grace throughout, both in my ſoul and in my body, in the powers and faculties of the one, and in the parts and members of the other, do take great pleaſure & much joy in the good Law of God, commanding good duties, both of piety towards God, and of love, juſtice, and mercy towards men. I find much ſweetneſſe and pleaſure in the knowledge of that Law, and in meditating in the ſame, and in the practice of good duties that are therein contained, according to that meaſure of grace that is given to me.*

Now in that the *Apoſtle* here ſaith of himſelf, that as he was regenerate, he delighted in the Law of God: The point hence is this,

That Gods children, and ſuch as are truly regenerate, they delight in the good Law of God, and in the things therein commanded, it is a matter of ſweetneſſe and much pleaſure to them, to be acquainted with the Law of God, and to meditate in it, and according to the meaſure of grace given, and as occaſion is offered them, to yield obedience to it; it is even the joy of the hearts of Gods children, to know the Law of God, to meditate in it, and to practice the duties therein required, as any juſt occaſion is offered. And hence it is, that *S. John* ſaith, 1 *Joh. 5. 3. that the Commandments of God are not grievous.* His meaning is to them that have their hearts renewed by grace, to them the Commandment of God was not grievous, but eaſie, ſweet and pleaſant. *David* makes known a marvellous great delight he took in the Lawes and Commandments of God *Oh how love I thy Law! it is my meditation continually.* As if he had ſaid,

*Doct. 1.*

Gods Children delight in the good Law of God, and in the things therein commanded.

*Pla. 119. 97.*



I am not able to expresse the greatnesse of my love and delight in thy Law : I want words to expresse it. And in that *Psalm* we finde, that he sets forth his love and delight in the Law and Commandments of God by many notable similitudes, *Verse 14: I have had as great delight in the way of thy Testimonies, as in all riches. Verse 72. The Law of thy mouth is better unto me, then thousands of gold and silver, Vers. 111. Thy Testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the joy of mine heart. Vers. 127. Therefore love I thy Commandements above gold, yea, above most fine gold. Vers. 162. I rejoyce at thy word, as one that findeth much spoil: and the like. And Psal. 19. 10. he puts it down positively, that the Statutes and Judgments of the Lord are more to be desired then gold, yea, then much fine gold, sweeter also then the hony, and the hony-combe.*

Thus it was with *David*, and doubtlesse, thus it is with as many as have the Spirit of *David*, even with as many as have the Spirit of grace and sanctification, and are truly regenerate : it is their joy, and their delight is to know the Law of God, to meditate in it, and to practise the duties therein required, as just occasion is offered : and the reasons and grounds of their delight are these ;

First, they are able to look on the Law of God with a spiritual eye, and to see the beauty and excellency of it ; even therein to behold most absolute holiness and righteousness set before them, yea, the very Image of God himself, in respect of his perfect justice, manifested : and these things are most lovely, and must needs affect and draw the hearts of Gods children to them.

Again, secondly Gods children know, that howsoever the Moral Law is not the cause of eternal life, yet it is the rule of good life, and the way in which they are to walk that shall be saved : and therefore they joy and delight in the knowledge of it, and in meditating in it, and in the practise of the duties required in it, as just occasion is offered. " Every child of God hath his measure of " delight in these things, indeed some a greater, and some a lesse measure, according to the measure of grace that is given them.

Note.

Quest.

But haply here some may say, The Moral Law of God reveales sin, and it accuseth and condemns for sin : do Gods Children find sweetnesse and pleasure in it in that respect ?

Ans.

I answer, Yes, they do, in that the Law of God discovers to them evils and sins, that they may see them, be humbled for them, and seek to God for mercy for the pardon of them, and that they may avoid and forsake evil and sin : even in this respect Gods Children joy and delight in the Law of God, and find sweetnesse in it. And therefore *David* said *Psal. 141. 5. Let the righteous smite me: for that is a benefit unto me, and let him reprove me, and it shall be as a precious oyl that shall not break mine head.*

Gods Children love the Law of God, because it discovers sin to them, and they like those means best, that are most powerful and effectual to that purpose. Thus it is with every child of God, and with every one that is truly regenerate in some measure.

Use 1.

A ground of tryal, by which men may know whether they be the children of God or no.

Now then let this, for the use of it, serve as a ground of tryal to every one of us. By this, as one special note, we may know, whether we be Gods children, and truly regenerate or no. Dost thou find that thou hast a measure of true delight in the Law of God ? Dost thou take pleasure in the knowledge of it, in meditating and musing on it ? Dost thou find sweetnesse in the practise of the good duties therein required ? Is it the joy of thine heart to be exercised in the duties of piety, in hearing the Word of God, in praying, in the duties of equity, justice, love and mercy towards men ? Are these things as meat and drink to thee ? Dost thou find that thou canst delight in these things, as at a Feast or Banquet ? Dost thou find sweetnesse in the Word of God, when thy sins are thereby discovered and rebuked ? And canst thou rejoyce unfainedly and blesse God for it, when any thing thou takest pleasure in, is discovered to be a sin ? And dost



doſt thou love them that lovingly admoniſh thee of a manifeſt ſin? Is it thus with thee? Surely, that is an infallible evindence and testimony that thou art truly regenerate, and haſt the Spirit of grace in thee, and that thou art a child of God?

But on the other ſide, If ſo be thou find that thou haſt no delight in the *Law* of God, thou careſt not for the knowledge of it; the means to come by the knowledge of it being offered, thou reſtardeſt not, and thou findeſt no ſweetneſſe in the practice of good duties, in hearing the Word, in Prayer, in receiving the Sacraments, in ſanctifying the Sabbath, and other holy duties, or in duties of love towards men. Are theſe things tedious and irkſome to thee? and thou ſayeſt as the people did, *Amos 8. 5. When will the Sabbath be gone?* It is wearifome to thee to perform holy duties, and thou performeſt them heavily and ſleepily. And when the *Law* and Word of God diſcovers thy ſins, thou art ſo far from loving it, and delighting in it, as in that reſpect thou hateſt it, and condeſt wiſh there were no ſuch *Law*, yea, thou hateſt thoſe that lovingly admoniſh thee of thy ſins, and juſtly reprove thee for the ſame, as it is the manner of too many; Is it thus with thee? Deceive not thy ſelf, whoſoever thou art; thy caſe is not good, thou art yet in the dregs of nature, the Spirit of God hath not yet wrought on thee, and thou canſt not comfort thy ſelf in this, that thou art a child of God. No, no: every child of God hath ſome meaſure of true delight in the *Law* of God, in the knowledg of it, in meditating on it, and in the practice of good duties: and therefore hereby try ſelf. Haply thou wilt ſay, Wicked men and hypocrites ſometimes delight in the *Law* and in the Word of God, *Matth. 13. 20.* Chriſt ſaith, *Temporaries*, ſuch as fall away in the time of tryal, receive the Word with joy: and it is ſaid of Herod, *Mark 6. 20.* that he heard JOHN gladly, and did many things.

How then ſhall I know that my delight in the *Law* and Word of God, goes beyond the delight of an hypocrite, and is ſuch as will yield me true comfort, and that I may gather thence that I am truly regenerate?

Queſt.

I answer thee, Thou ſhalt know it by two things eſpecially:

Anſw.

Fiſt, if thou find thy delight to be impartial, even a delight in the whole *Law* and Word of God; whether the Word comfort, or teach, or exhort, or threaten, or reprove, yet ſtill thou findeſt ſweetneſſe in it. For though an hypocrite may delight in the Word of God promiſing mercy and good things, or teaching ſome things not ſo contrary to his humour, yet if either it diſcover his privy corruption, or rebuke him for the ſame, then he likes it not: and therefore if it be ſo with thee, that whether the Word comfort, or threaten, or rebuke, yet ſtill it is ſweet and pleaſant to thee: therein thou goeſt beyond an hypocrite.

Again, if thou find that thy delight in the Word of God is a working delight, it works in thee an holy care and endeavour, to conform thy ſelf to the will of God, revealed in his holy and righteous *Law*, and that as well in thy inward thoughts and affections, as in thy outward actions; therein certainly it goes beyond the delight of an hypocrite: his delight may make him do ſome outward good things, and that is all; it never makes him ſtrive to ſubdue his reaſon, will, and affections, to the obedience of the Word of God.

By theſe two notes then try thy ſelf, and never reſt, till thou find that thou doſt delight in the whole *Law* and Word of God, whether it teach comfort, or threaten, or rebuke, and that thy delight in the Word of God is a working delight, working in thee an holy care and endeavour, to conform thy ſelf to the holy will of God in all things, as well in thy thoughts and inward affections, as in thy outward actions: and thereupon thou mayeſt conclude to thy comfort, that thy delight in the *Law* and Word of God goes beyond the delight of an hypocrite, and thence alſo thou mayeſt conclude, that thou art truly regenerate, and haſt in thee the Spirit of grace and ſanctification.

Again,



*Use. 2.*  
Gods children  
find unspeak-  
able comfort  
in the Word of  
the Gospel.

Again, is it so that Gods children delight in the Law of God? Do they find sweetnesse in that that reveals sin and doth accuse and condemn for sin? Surely, much more do they find sweetnesse and comfort in the Word of the gospel, that discovering to them the riches of Gods mercy in Christ for the pardon of their sins, without question their joy and delight in that, in knowing it and believing it, is unspeakable and glorious. The world commonly thinks that the life of a true believing Christian, is without joy, an heavy, lumpish, and uncomfortable life, and that there is no mirth in them that truly fear God, they live a life without delight. Alas, poor souls! they are deceived that so think; Gods children find sweetnesse and comfort in the Law of God, humbling them and wounding them for their sins, and much more sweetnesse do they find in the sweet promises of the gospel: yea, they find such sweetnesse in them (being known, believed, and applyed to themselves by a true faith) as they would not part withal for ten thousand worlds: for those bind up the broken hearts and wounded souls, with heavenly comfort, and they work in them peace of conscience, which is a continual feast, and they settle them in assurance of right to eternal life, happinesse, and glory in heaven, and do give them a taste and a beginning of that joy, eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor the heart of man conceived; and therefore thou art deceived, that thinkest they have no delight, and live a life without joy.

In that the Apostle here saith, *He delighted in the Law of God, concerning the inner man*; Hence also we gathered argument of his regeneration, that therefore the Apostle was truly regenerate, because his delight was in the Law of God concerning the inner man. As first this, in that he delighted in the knowledge of the Law of God, and in obedience to it. Therefore he was a man truly regenerate, and again in that here he speaks of his Inner man, thereby meaning his regenerate part, that therefore also he was a man truly regenerate.

Now against this argument objections are brought: we have heretofore propounded the objection that lyes against the first, and answered it, *Vers. 16.* and therefore I passe by that; and I will now onely propound the objection made against the second argument, and answer that, and then proceed.

Thus then some do object; say they, *The Inner man* doth not here signifie the regenerate part, but by *Inner man*, we are to understand the mind, as standing in opposition to the body: and for this they bring *2 Cor. 4. 16.* where the Apostle saith, *Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed daily.*

*Quest.*

Meaning, say they, by *outward man*, the body: and by *inward man*, the minde: yea, say they, the Apostle so expounds himself, *Verse 25.* of this Chapter: *Then I my self in my minde serve the Law of God, but in my flesh the law of sin.* By his *minde*, understanding the same that before he expressed, in saying *the Inner man*. Now the minde is found as well in unregenerate persons, as in them that be truly regenerate; and therefore it is no good argument to prove the Apostle to be regenerate, because he speaks of his *inner man*.

*Answ.*

Now to this I answer: It is false: they say that by *inner man*, is here meant the minde; for the *inner man* is here opposed not to the body, but to the members, and to the flesh, by which the unregenerate part is signified: and therefore it must needs be, that by the *inner man*, is here meant the regenerate part. And that this is no mis-construction of these words, that of the Apostle, *Ephes. 3. 16, 17.* makes it clear, where he saith, *That ye may be strengthened by his Spirit in the Inner man: That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.* Shewing plainly, that by the *Inner man*, he means not onely the mind, but the heart also, and the affections of it, and the regenerate part throughout. As for the Text alledged *2 Cor. 4. 16.* they misunderstand it, expounding the inward man to be the mind, and the outward man, the body.

The



The text it ſelf is againſt that Expoſition; for the Apoſtle ſaith, The inward man is renewed daily. Now renovation is not only of the mind, but it is alſo of all other powers and faculties of the ſoul, yea of all the parts and members of the body; and he ſaith again, Though our outward man periſh, or be corrupted; meaning, whatſoever in true believers is by the croſſe and by afflictions weakened, and diminished, and purged out: and that is not only the corruption of the body, but the corruption alſo of the ſoul, and that chiefly even the ſinful luſts and deſires of the heart, love of the world, love of pleaſures, and carnal joy and delight: and ſo that Text makes rather againſt them, then for them. And where as they alleage the Apoſtles own Expoſition in the laſt verſe of this Chapter, if the words be rightly underſtood, they make nothing to their purpoſe: for certainly the mind ſerving God, is the part of man that is ſpiritual and truly regenerate: the mind being not regenerate, but in the natural ſtate and condition, it is defiled, *Tit. 1. 15. and cannot ſerve God.* And therefore when the Apoſtle ſaith, *I my ſelf in my mind ſerve the Law of God,* he means, in his mind regenerate, and renewed by grace: and the mind is put for the whole *Inner man*, and for his regenerate part throughout, and ſo it ſtill remains a true note of the Apoſtles regeneration, that he here ſpeaks of his *Inner man*, and it is a true note to others, that they alſo are truly regenerate, if they be able to ſpeak it in truth, that they have in them an *Inner man*, or new man and that now they are ſo wrought on by the Spirit of grace, - as that they find themſelves altered and changed throughout, that the Image of God in ſome meaſure is ſet on all the powers of their ſouls, and on all the parts and members of their bodies, and that now they are new creatures in Jeſus Chriſt, *2 Cor. 5. 17.* That is a true note of their Regeneration: and let that ſerve for answer to the Objection propounded.

Now further, in that the Apoſtle here ſpeaking of his regenerate part, ſets it forth in theſe terms, and calls his regenerate part throughout both in ſoul and body, his *Inner man*, and that for the reaſon which before I gave, becauſe Regeneration is chiefly ſeated in the heart and mind, and in the inward powers and faculties of the ſoul: hence we may take up this concluſion;

That true regeneration is chiefly ſeated in the heart and in the mind: a man or woman that would find true comfort in the work of grace in them ſelves, muſt find it working and powerful, eſpecially and principally in their hearts and minds, howſoever the work of grace muſt be found in all the powers of the ſoul, yea, in all the parts and members of the body, yet it muſt be found chiefly in the heart and in the mind. And hence it is that the Apoſtle thus exhorts, *Rom. 12. 2. Be ye changed by the renewing of your mind.* And *Ephes. 4. 23.* he uſeth an exhortation to the ſame purpoſe, *Be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind.* *2 Cor. 7. 1.* *That we may grow up in full holineſſe in the fear of God* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſſe of the fleſh and ſpirit.* As if he had ſaid, We cannot grow up to full holineſſe or to ſound and true holineſſe, if we be not cleanſed from all filthineſſe both of the fleſh and ſpirit, and eſpecially of Spirit; for what is it for a man to cleanſe his hand, foot, eye, or tongue, or the like, and yet have his mind polluted and filthy? Surely, that is with the Pharife to make clean the out-ſide of the cup and platter, when the inſide is full of rottenneſſe and corruption: and we know, it is but in vain for a man to lop off the branches, or to cut down the body of a Tree that he would have grow no more, and yet leave the root in the earth; for that will ſprout and grow up again; ſo it is to no purpoſe to cut off as it were ſome branches of ſin, and leave the root of it in the heart and in the mind; for that will at one time or other ſend forth other bitter and unſavourie fruit. We muſt therefore labour to ſtock up the root of ſin, and to find the work of grace chiefly in our hearts and minds, if we would have true comfort in the work of grace in our ſelves: and the reaſon of it may be theſe

*Doctrine 2.*  
True regeneration is chiefly ſeated in the heart and mind of man.

First, as before the fall of man, the mind of man retained the chief part of the Image

*Reason*



Image of God : so now being renewed by grace, it hath in it the chiefest part of the Image of God restored and renewed.

2.

And again, the heart and mind are the beginning of all good actions; and if the mind be dark and ignorant, and the heart full of rebellion, there can be nothing but sin in all the powers of the soul, and in all the parts and members of the body : and therefore it must needs be, that if we would find true comfort in the work of grace in our selves, we must find it working and powerful, especially and principally in our hearts and minds.

Use.

Outward re-  
formation  
alone, is no  
ground of true  
comfort

And therefore for the use of this. Deceive not thy self, whosoever thou art, think not to find true comfort to thine own soul, only because thy outward man is in some measure reformed, and thy hands, eyes and other outward parts of the body are reformed, and that in respect of thy outward carriage thou walkest unblamably and without reproof. Alas, this thou maist do, and yet want the power of grace in thy heart and mind; yea, this thou maist do, and yet be ignorant of God, and of the wayes of God, and be yet a man or woman of an unreformed heart. We see it in common experience, that some that are grossely ignorant, yet walk unblamably in respect of the World, they deal justly and truly with every one, yea, and they perform some outward duties of Piety and Religion, and an hypocrite, one that is rotten at the heart, and carries in him an heart full of wicked and noysome lusts, of Pride, Envy, Covetousnesse, and the like, may make a goodly shew, and may seeme to be Religious, yea, he may carry himself so religiously in respect of his outward carriage, as that they that are truly religious, and converse with him cannot discern him, but may be deceived by him. Thus did Judas, he carried himself so smoothly as the rest of the Apostles could not discern him, no, when Christ said, One of them should betray him, they could not presently point at Judas, and say he was the man. No, no, doubtlesse Judas had behaved himself as religiously in shew as the best of them, yet was he a notable hypocrite, he had a rotten heart within him, and a bitter root of covetousnesse was in his heart : and therefore rest not in this, whosoever thou art, that thou art outwardly reformed; that will deceive thee if thou rest in it. If thou wouldst have true comfort in the work of grace in thy self, labour to find it powerful in thy heart and in thy mind principally, and to this purpose consider, that if grace be not powerful and working specially in thine heart, in time of tryall it will deceive thee, and the Lord will at one time or other discover thee and lay thee open to thy shame. And hence it is, that many fall away from the profession they have made in former time, and return with the Dogge to his vomit, and the Sow to her tumbling in the myre, because indeed they were never sound at the root, grace was never powerful in their hearts. Oh then, labour for this, and never rest till thou find it in thy self, even grace working especially in thine heart and mind, never rest till thou find thy mind truly inlightned, and thine heart truly reformed, and that thou makest conscience of thy very thoughts, and that thine heart is upright with God, though thou have many failings; and that indeed will yield thee true comfort both in life and death.

One thing yet remains to be noted; in that the Apostle here calls his regenerate part his *Inner man*, and gives it the title of a whole man, not a piece or part of a man; but as it were an entire and whole man. Hence we are further taught.

Doct. 3:

True regene-  
ration is intire  
spreading it  
self over the  
whole man,

That true Regeneration is entyre, it spreads it self over the whole man, even over all the powers of the soul, and over all the parts and members of the body, and where sanctifying grace is truly wrought, it is not found in one power or faculty of the soul, and not in another, but it is found in a proportionable measure in every power and faculty of the soul, and in every part and member of the body : for why? The Spirit of God never works in any man or woman, but he goes thorow stich with his work, he works throughout : if he enlighten the minde with saving knowledge, he also works on the will and on the affections in like proportion, and in all other faculties of the soul.

And



And hence it is, that regeneration is called a new Creation, 2 Cor. 5. 17. *If any man be in Christ, let him be a new creature: and a new birth, Tit. 3. 5. and therefore it must needs be entire, and of the whole man; for doubtlesse the Spirit of God brings not forth a monstrous birth, all head and nothing else, but he brings forth a perfect birth, I mean, perfect in respect of all the parts, and where he sanctifies, he sanctifies throughout, as the Apostle prayed, 1 Thes. 5. 23. in Spirit, in soul and in body.*

Let no man then deceive himself, let no man think he is truly regenerate, because haply he is enlightened, and because he hath in him some knowledge of God and of good things, and is able to speak of such things, and yet notwithstanding his heart is not reformed, but he nourisheth in his heart some corrupt lust, or some inordinate affection of Pride, of envy, of Covetousnesse or the like; if any so think, he deceives himself.

Herod knew much, and did many things: yet he was a meer carnal man, possessed with an inordinate love of his Brothers Wife. And therefore think not that the Spirit of God hath wrought in thee to thy Regeneration, unlesse thou finde that he hath wrought on thee throughout. If thou wouldst be sure that thou art truly regenerate thou must finde a proportionable measure of grace in every power and faculty of thy soul: thou must finde not onely thy minde enlightened with knowledge, but thine heart also in like proportion sanctified, and that now thou doest not onely know God as he hath revealed himself in his Word and Works, but thou doest also acknowledge him, and put thy confidence in him as a loving Father, and that now thou lovest God, his Word, his children, and doest truly fear God, and endeavour to please him in all things, leading a pure and unblameable life, as becometh a new creature: that will give thee assurance, that thou art truly regenerate.

*Use.*  
Illumination  
not sufficient  
to prove true  
Regeneration.

#### VERS. 23.

*But I see another Law in my members, rebelling against the Law of my minde, and leading me captive unto the law of sin, which is in my members.*



He Apostle having said in the Verse before, that he delighted in the Law of God concerning the *Inner man*; and as he was renewed by grace; here he makes known how it was with him, in respect of the remainder of sinne that still abode in him (namely) thus, that there was an enmity between that remainder of sin, and the grace of Regeneration that was in him. And first, he sets down the measure of that enmity, as that sin remaining in him, resisted and rebelled against the grace that was wrought in him, it did violently resist it as a Rebel his Prince. And he amplifies that by his own sense, feeling and sight of it, that he saw it so to be; he saith, *I see another law in my members rebelling against the Law of my minde.* And then, secondly, he makes known the issue and successe of that resistance and that rebelling of sin, which was this, That it led him captive to sin, and brought him under the power of sin, in the words following: *leading me captive unto the Law of sin, which is in my members.* Thus we have the several parts of this Verse, and the general matter of it.

Now for the first part of this Verse in these words: *I see another law in my members, rebelling against the Law of my minde.* I will stand a while to cleer the words touching the sense & meaning of them: *But I see another law in my members. I see.* The word signifieth, I behold or look on. The meaning is, I plainly see and perceive, and I discern *another law in my members.* The word (*Law*) is here put as before, *Vers. 21. Metaphorically*, to signifie the corruption of nature, and not that barely, but the power, and force and strength of it, having in it the power and force of a Law, as it were ruling, governing and commanding.

*Interpretation*



As if he had said, I see another power, even the corruption of nature, which is as a Law that commandeth in my members. Some would have the word (members) here to signifie only the parts and members of the body, but (as I take it) we are thereby to understand the same the Apostle spake of before, *Vers. 18.* under the word *flesh*, namely, the unregenerate part throughout, both in the powers of the soul, and in the parts and members of the body. And the unregenerate part is thus called *flesh*, or *members*, because when the corruption of nature breaks out, and brings forth the effects and cursed fruits of it, it is seen and perceived rather in the outward parts and members of the body, then in the inward powers and faculties of the soul: and therefore the Apostle said, *Rom. 12. 19.* *Let no sin reign therefore in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither give your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, to commit iniquity, but give your members servants unto righteousness in holiness.*

(*Rebelling.*) The word here rendred rebelling, is metaphorical, it is borrowed and taken from such as openly rebel against their lawful Prince and Sovereigne, and take weapons and bear Armes, and wage warr against him, and stand at open defiance with him; and it signifieth not a weak, or secret, or under-hand resisting, but as it were an open and a violent opposing, even a strong and powerful withstanding and striving against.

*The Law of my mind.* The word *Law* is here again put by way of similitude, for the power and force of grace in the mind; and by (*mind*) we are to understand the mind regenerate and renewed by grace; and by a *Synechdoche*, that is put for the whole *Inner man*, and for the regenerate part throughout, both in soul and in body; because here the mind is opposed to the members, or to the flesh, by which the regenerate part is signified: and so by the *Law of the mind*, is here meant the power of grace, as a Law commanding in the regenerate part.

Thus then conceive we the Apostles meaning, when he saith, *But I see another Law in my members, rebelling against the Law of my mind*, as if he had said;

*But I plainly see, and well perceive, and I discern another power and force. I mean the corruption of my nature, that still in part abides in me, which is as a Law that commands in that part of me that is unregenerate; I see, and I discern, that mightily, violently, and strongly opposing, and striving against the power of grace, that is in my whole Inner man, even the power of grace, which is as a Law that commands to the contrary in that part of me that is truly regenerate.*

Now first, in that the Apostle having said in the Verse before, that he delighted in the Law of God concerning the *inner man*, he presently subjoynes to it in this Verse, *but I see another Law in my members, rebelling against the Law of my mind.* As if he had said, But I see there is resistance, there is opposition made against that delight of mine, by the remainder of sin still abiding in me. Hence note we in a word the point was stood on before.

That Gods children have their delight they take in the word of God, and in good things, many times crossed and hindred, and besides outward things, as the world and wicked men, and the like opposing them, in respect of their love and liking of good things, and their delight in them, they have the remainder of sin still abiding in them, to crosse them, and to oppose against them: and when they find sweetnesse and delight in good things, their own corruption is ready to quash and quell that delight of theirs: because indeed (as heretofore I have shewed) corruption of nature still abiding in them, is stirring and working, and one work of it is to defile and expresse the good motions of the mind, and the work of grace that is in them.

And hence it is, that no sooner doth a childe of God find delight in good things, but his own corruption makes resistance and opposition against that delight of his, and seeks to hinder it, and to shake it out of his heart. And therefore

**Doct. I.**

The delight that Gods children find in good things, is many times crossed and hindred.



fore know this. whoſoever thou art that thou canſt not look alwayes to find the like meaſure of delight in good things; thy delight in good things will be ſometimes greater, and ſometimes leſſe, for why? thine own corruption makes reſiſtance, and ſtands in oppoſition againſt that delight of thine, and thou ſhalt finde it will ſometimes hinder it, and weaken it, and leſſen it in the meaſure: and therefore when thou findeſt in thee any meaſure of delight in good things, make much of it, cheriſh it, and labour to keep it in thine heart, and to that purpoſe do theſe two things:

First, eſteem of goods things according to the worth and excellency of them, as Job did, Job 23. 12. *I have eſteemed the words of his mouth, more then mine appointed food.*

The leaſt meaſure of delight in good things is to cheriſhed, how.

Secondly, eſtabliſh thy delight by counſel, as it is Prov. 20. 18. I mean, by taking counſel with God: go to the Lord by prayer, be earneſt and inſtant with him to help and aſſiſt thee by his grace, that thou mayeſt continue delighting in good things. And if thou do theſe two things, doubtleſſe thou ſhalt be able to keep thine heart in ſome good meaſure, delighting in good things, yea, thou ſhalt finde thy delight in thoſe things much increaſed.

Obſerve we in the next place, that the Apoſtle doth not barely affirm this, that there was a law in his members rebelling againſt the Law of his minde, but he affirms it as a thing ſeen and diſcerned, and plainly perceived by him. *I ſee* (ſaith he) *another law in my members rebelling againſt the Law of my minde*: I plainly ſee it, and I well perceive it: Hence then take we notice of a ſpecial qualification of Gods children, and the point hence is this,

That thus it is with Gods children, and with as many as be truly regenerate, that they are well acquainted with the rebellion of their own hearts; Gods children ſee, and well perceive the ſtrong working of their own corruption ſtill in part abiding in them, how violently and mightily it oppoſeth and ſtriveth againſt the power of grace that is in them, they are not ignorant of it, but they ſee and diſcern how far ſin ſpreads it ſelf in their nature, and the great might and force it hath in them. And hence it is, that the people of God, and the children of God many times complain of the rebellion of their own hearts, and of the vileneſſe of their corrupt nature; which they would never do, if they had not a lively ſeaſe and feeling of it, and if they did not cleerely ſee it, and diſcern it, *Iſai. 63. 17.* The Prophet in the behalfe of the people, complains of blindneſſe of minde and hardneſſe of heart; *O Lord* (ſaith he) *why haſt thou made us to erre from thy wayes, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?* And *Iſai. 64. 6.* *We have all been as an unclean thing, and all our righteouſneſſe is as filthy clouts.* And *Pſal. 51. 10.* *David cries out, Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right ſpirit within me.* Which he would not have done, but that he ſaw and diſcerned in him an unclean heart, and a crooked ſpirit, and thus indeed it is with all Gods children, they are well acquainted with the rebellion of their own hearts, they plainly ſee, and perceive, and feel the ſtrong working of ſin in themſelves, and they diſcern the violent oppoſition that it makes againſt that grace that is in them; Gods children plainly ſee unbelief and doubting oppoſing their faith, ignorance, and erroneous conceits ſtanding up againſt their ſound knowledge, hardneſſe, and dulneſſe, and deadneſſe of ſpirit, ſtanding againſt their delight and cheerefulneſſe in good things and the like: And the reaſon of it is this,

*Doct. 2.*  
Gods children are well acquainted with the rebellion of their own hearts.

They have the life of grace in them, they are quickned by the Spirit of grace, and they are living in reſpect of the grace that is in them: and as the wiſe man ſaith, *they have their eyes in their heads*, and they have their ſpiritual ſenſes about them, and they are apprehenſive, and ſenſible of that oppoſition that is made againſt that life and power of grace that is in them; and ſo they plainly ſee, and perceive, and feel the ſtrong working of ſin in themſelves, and they are well acquainted with the rebellion of their own hearts.

*Reaſon.*

Now then this for the Uſe: First, it makes known a manifeſt difference between the regenerate & the unregenerate. The regenerate, they are well acquainted with

*Uſe 1.*



A difference  
between the  
Regenerate  
and unregene-  
rate discove-  
red.

Use. 2  
Comfort for  
such as are  
well acquaint-  
ed with the  
rebellion of  
their own  
hearts.

Note.

Doct. 3:  
The corrupti-  
on of nature  
hath great  
force in Gods  
children, in  
their unregene-  
rate part.

with the rebellion of their own hearts; but (alas) it is far otherwise with the unregenerate, they have no manner of sight, nor sence, nor feeling of the power and strong working of sin in themselves; they have many sinful lusts ruling and raigning in them, and they see them not, much lesse do they trouble them: you shall never hear a carnal Gospeller, a carnal professor of the Gospel, complaining of his unbelieve, of his hardnesse of heart, of his deadnesse and dulnesse in hearing the Word of God, in praying, or the like; he hath no sight of these things, he perceives them not: no, he perceives not the temptations of Satan; the grosse temptations of Satan laid against him, never trouble him; which indeed is a plain evidence that *the strong man armed holds possession of him*, Luk. 11. 21. And know it, whosoever thou art, if thou be ignorant, blind, and unfeeling, in respect of the power of the sinful lusts that are in thee, it is the more probable thou art still in thy natural blindnesse, and that thou art not an hairebreadth beyond an unregenerate person.

Again, is it so, that Gods children are well acquainted with the rebellion of their own hearts? is it so with them, that they plainly see, and well perceive and feel the strong working of sin in themselves, and how it opposeth the power of grace that is in them? Then here is comfort for thee, whosoever thou art that hast a sight of thine own inward rebellion, and dost plainly see and discern the strong working of sin, opposing against that power of grace that is in thee.

Dost thou see unbelieve and doubting opposing against thy faith, dulnesse and deadnesse of heart standing against thy delight and cheerfulness in good things, and crossing and hindering thee in the performance of good duties? Comfort thy self, it is no otherwise with thee then with the dearest of Gods children, yea this is a plain evidence that thou art a child of God, and truly regenerate; for certainly corruption never sees corruption, but grace only sees it. And that thou hast a true feeling of thine own inward rebellion, it is from the life of grace, and from the Spirit of grace; and as one saith well, If thou feel the hardnesse of thine own heart, it is so much comfort to thee, as it is a testimony that thine heart is not altogether hardned: and therefore be not discouraged because thou seest the inward rebellion of thine own heart, and because thou feelest a strong opposition against that grace that is in thee. If thou see and feel these things with grief, and desirest to be freed from them, and to be better; and being wearied and tired with sin, desirest to please God in a simple obedience of faith, comfort thy self; that seals up to thee, that thou art a child of God: think on that to thy comfort.

The next thing that comes to be observed is this; the Apostle (as here we see) speaking of the remainder of sin that still abode in him, and rebelling against the power of grace that was in him, he expresseth his minde under the word [Law;] *I see (saith he) another law in my members, rebelling against the Law of my minde*. He compares the remainder of sin that was in him, to a law ruling, governing, and commanding. Hence we are given to understand thus much.

That the corruption of nature noth not onely remain in Gods children in part, so long as they live in this world, but it hath also great force in them; it is as a Law that rules, and governs, and commands in that part of them that is yet unregenerate, and so far forth as Gods children be unregenerate, the remainder of sin doth exercise a kinde of authority in all the powers of their souls, and in all the parts and members of their bodyes, and it is as a Law that commands and requires obedience to be given unto it; the corruption of nature remaining in Gods children, is no weak and feeble thing, but it is a thing that is strong and powerful in the best of them, in their unregenerate part. And hence it is, that the corruption of nature that abides in true believers, and in such as are truly regenerate, is still called *The old man*, as Ephes. 4. 22. *Put off the old man*, saith the Apostle, speaking to the Saints. Even in Gods children it hath the name and title of *the old man*, it is in them as an old man, it is no tender weakling, but



but it is tough, and strong, and as it were a man grown in years, and it carries with it some authority, and power, and command in their unregenerate part.

And hence likewise it was, that the Apostle speaking to the *Romans*, of whom he was perswaded that they were dead to sin, and quickned by grace to newness of life, *Rom. 6. 12.* he useth this dissuasion or dehortation, *Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.* As if he had said, I know, and perswade my self, that you are truly regenerate, but yet I know withal, that sin in part still abides in you, yea, it is not onely in you, but it is strong and powerful in you, so far forth as you are yet unregenerate, and it will still look to rule and raige, and command in you as in former times; and therefore it concerns you to look to it: let not sin rule and raige in you, that ye should obey in the lusts thereof. And to these, many other testimonies might be added, confirming this truth: That the corruption of nature doth onely remain in Gods children in part, whilst they live in this world, but it is as a Law that rules, and governs, and commands in the best of them, in their unregenerate part, and so far forth as they be unregenerate: yea, doubtlesse, Gods children find it so in their own experience, that the corruption of nature that still abides in them in part, sometimes commands in their understanding, sometimes in their will and affections, sometimes in the parts and members of their bodies, yea, sometimes they are over-carried by it to some foul sin.

Now the reason and ground of it is this: In their unregenerate part, and so far forth as they be unregenerate, there is nothing to withstand the power and force of their natural corruption, the unregenerate part hath no grace in it to withstand that corruption, but it remains in the natural force and strength of it, and therefore it must needs be strong and powerful, and as a law ruling and commanding in the unregenerate part.

And this being a truth; first, it serves further to confirm that which heretofore I have made known, and will now onely remember in a word, namely this, that the best actions of the regenerate are imperfectly good, and they come short of that perfection that ought to be in them: for why? The most holy and most regenerate that live in the world, are throughout in part unregenerate, and so far forth as they be unregenerate, the corruption of their own hearts hath the command of them, it rules and governs, and commands as a Law in that part of them that is yet unregenerate, and that being throughout, it cannot possibly be that their best works should be perfect.

Again, is it so, that the corruption of nature doth not onely remain in Gods children in part, so long as they live in this world, but it is also as a Law ruling and governing, and commanding in their unregenerate part, and so far forth as they be unregenerate? Is it thus with Gods children, and such as are truly regenerate? How then, I beseech you, is it with unregenerate persons, and with them that are yet in their natural state? Surely it must needs be, that the corruption of nature as a law rules, and governs, and commands in them altogether; in them there is no dram of sanctifying grace, there is nothing but flesh in them, and therefore they are wholly and throughout ruled, and governed, and commanded by the corruption of their own hearts; and that is a miserable condition: yet so it is with every unregenerate person, his own corruption hath the whole command of him, and his own lusts are as lawes unto him, and the holy Ghost makes it known so to be in the Book of God. We read *Job 21. 14.* *Job* brings in the wicked, saying thus to God, *Depart from us: we desire not the knowledge of thy wayes.* And *Jer. 6. 16.* the Prophet brings in the Lord, saying thus to his people, *Stand in the wayes, and behold, and ask for the old way, which is the good way, and walk therein, & ye shall find rest for your souls.* And he presently subjoynes the answer of the people, *We will not walk therein.* Now we may not think, that they were so forlorn, and so shameless, as that they durst thus speak with their mouthes; but the meaning is, that thus they spake in their

Reason.

Use 1.

The best actions of the Regenerate are imperfectly good.

Use 2.

The corruption of nature rules and commands in unregenerate persons altogether & throughout.



and their affections spoke thus, in that they purposed with themselves to cast off the yoke of the Lord, and to live after their own lusts. And do not we find it in woful experience, that many cast off the word of God, and the wayes of God, and they will not be guided by the will of God made known unto them? Yea, some stick not to speak it, that they will follow their own wayes, and will do what seemes good to themselves, say the Preachers what they will or can to the contrary. And what is this but a plain evidence, that their own corruption hath the whole command of them, and that their own lusts are as Laws to them, and have the command of them altogether? and that is a fearful condition.

And take notice of it, whosoever thou art, that art yet in thy natural state and condition; hast thou no evidence of sanctifying grace in thy heart? Dost thou not find and feel the power and the work of the spirit in thy soul in any measure? Surely, then this is thy case, then thine own corruption hath the whole command of thee, and the lusts of thine own heart are as Laws to thee, and they rule thee, and they command thee, and thou art at their beck and command, and a slave to them; and that is a miserable bondage: and if thou tender the good of thy soul, hasten out of it with all possible speed.

Now further observe we, that the Apostle saith, that remainder of sin that dwelt in him, was as a law commanding in his members: *I see another law in my members*: meaning, as I shewed, his unregenerate part throughout, which is exprest under the word (*members*) because when the corruption of nature breaks out, and brings forth the fruits of it, it is rather seen in the parts and members of the body, then in the powers and faculties of the soul. The point hence is this:

*Doctr. 4.*  
The corruption of nature is discerned, especially by the fruits of it, breaking out by the parts and members of the body.

That the corruption of nature is especially seen and perceived by the fruits of it, breaking out by the parts and members of the body, howsoever the corruption of nature be strong and powerful in the powers and faculties of the soul, and have a most strong working in them: and there is never any corrupt action in the body, but there had been first a corrupt motion and sinful affection in the soul, yet it shews it self as a law, ruling and commanding most evidently and most apparently, in and by the sinful actions of the body, and by the cursed fruits of it, that are brought forth in and by the parts and members of the body: and hence it was that the Apostle, *Rom. 3. 9.* having said that all both Jews and Gentiles were under sin, and that sin had power over them, and was as a law ruling and commanding in them, and being to prove that, and to make that manifest, he speaks of the power and working of sin, and of the fruits of it in the several parts and members of their bodies, *Vers. 13. 14. 15.* *Their throat (saith he) is an open sepulchre, they have used their tongues to deceit, the poyson of Asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood: Jam. 3. 6.* The Apostle saith, *The evil tongue is a world of wickednesse, and Vers. 8. It is full of deadly poyson.* The great wickednesse and poyson of the heart breaks forth and is apparant to be seen in that part and member of the body. And hence doubtlesse it was, that the Saints in former times laboured to keep the corruption of their hearts from breaking out by the parts and members of their bodies, and to that purpose they made covenants with their eyes, and tongues, and mouthes, and lips; as *Iob 31. 1. I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think on a maid? Psal. 39. 1. I thought (saith David) I will take heed to my wayes, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth bridled, while the wicked is in my sight. Psal. 119. 37. David prayes, Turn away mine eyes from regarding vanity, and Psal. 141. 3. Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips.* Thus did this Holy man pray, and thus did he and others make covenants with the parts and members of their bodies, because they knew well, that the corruption of their hearts is especially seen and perceived by the fruits of it, breaking out by the parts and members of the body. And the reasons of it are these:

First,



First, becauſe the corruption of nature breaking out by the parts and members of the body, it appears plainly to be powerful in the whole man, and that it rules and commands not onely within in the heart, but without alſo, and hath rule of the whole man. *Reasons. 1.*

And ſecondly, becauſe when the corruption of nature breaks out by the parts and members of the body, it is either by ſinful words or deeds, which are more ſenſible then inward evil motions and luſts, and evil thoughts of the heart. *2.*

And therefore, on theſe grounds we may ſet this down as a certain truth, that the corruption of nature is eſpecially ſeen and perceived by the fruits of it, breaking out by the parts and members of the body, and it ſhews it ſelf as a Law ruling and commanding, moſt evidently and moſt apparently in and by the ſinful actions of the body.

Now then this being a truth, it ſerves to teach us, that we may ſafely judge ſin to be ſtrong and powerful, and to be ruling and commanding in that man or woman, in whom we ſee it to break out in the fruits of it, by the parts and members of the body: ſuch as declare their ſins, as Sodom, and hide them not, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Iſai. 3. 9.* A man may ſee it, and even read it in their faces. Certainly in them ſin rules, and commands as a Law, and one may ſafely ſo judge. We have good evidence for it: Common Drunkards and common Swearers, and ſuch as utter out whatſoever the malice, the pride, or luſt of their hearts can ſuggeſt, and proud perſons, ſuch as ſet out the vanity and pride of their hearts in their ſhagge-hair, fore-tops, and garish attire, and the like, they think they are hardly dealt withal, and there is wrong done them when they are thought to be wicked and prophane: but indeed there is good evidence for it, and we may ſafely ſo judge of them, it is evident and apparant that ſin rules and commands in them as a Law, in that it breaks out in the fruits of it by the parts and members of the body. *Use 1.*

We may ſafely judge ſin to be ſtrong and powerful in whomſoever it breaks out in the fruits of it, by the parts and members of the body.

Yea but, ſaith the proud perſon, there is ſometimes a prouder heart under a ſober habit, then there is under that you call garish. *Object.*

It may be ſo; yet that is but a meer conjecture, that is unknown to thee; and thou ſo judging, thou art uncharitable in thy censure: but if a man look on thee that art garish in thy apparel, he needs not go by gueſſe, but he may certainly ſay, ſin rules and commands as a Law in thy heart, and ſo thou that haſt no rule of thy tongue, but thy mouth runs over, and powres out Swearing, Curſing, Railing, and ſuch like: A man may certainly ſay it, and not erre in ſo ſaying; that ſin rules and commands in thee as a Law. And therefore think it not a ſmall matter, as many do, to follow the faſhion of the world, to be idle in thy ſpeech, to ſwear by Faith and Troth. What, ſay ſome, are theſe ſo great matters? Yea, they are ſo great, as they ſhew plainly thou haſt no grace in thy heart, but that the Devil ſits in thy heart, and that ſin hath the chief rule and command of thy whole man, and a man may ſo judge of thee. *Anſw.*

Again, Is it ſo, that the corruption of nature is eſpecially ſeen and perceived by the fruits of it, breaking out by the parts and members of the body? Surely, then we muſt not only watch over our hearts, though over them chiefly, but we muſt alſo ſet a watch over every part and member of our bodies, and not ſuffer our eyes to wander after vanity, nor our tongues to rove and run at random, and to utter forth whatſoever the luſt of our hearts can ſuggeſt. *Jam. 1. 26.* ſaith the Apoſtle, *If a man ſeemeth religious, and refraineth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man deceives himſelf, his religion is but vain.* And on the contrary, if we narrowly watch over the parts and members of our bodies, and ſuffer not ſin to break out by any part or member of our bodies, in the common practice of any known ſin, this will be the comfort of it, that ſin doth not rule and command our whole man.

*Use 2.*  
We muſt not only watch over our hearts, but alſo over the parts and members of our bodies.

In the next place comes to be conſidered, the meaſure of oppoſition and reſiſtance, that the remainder of ſin made againſt that power of grace that was in the Apoſtle, under the word (*Rebelling*) *I ſee another Law in my members, rebelling*



**Doct. 5.**  
The remain-  
der of sin in  
Gods children  
makes a strong  
and violent  
opposition  
against the  
power of  
grace, that is  
in them.

rebelling against the Law of my mind; that is, as I shewed, not weakly, or secretly, or under-hand resisting, but as it were openly and violently opposing and striving against the Law of my mind. The point hence offered is this,

That the corruption of nature, that still in part abides in Gods Children, is as a Rebel against that power of grace that is in them, and as a Rebel it doth violently and strongly oppose and strive against it. The corruption of nature that remains in Gods Children, makes not a weak and feeble resistance against the power of grace that is in them, but it makes a mighty, strong and violent opposition against it, yea, it strives utterly to extinguish grace, to root it out, and to destroy it, it fareth with the remainder of sin, and with the lusts that arise thence, as it doth with one that riseth up in rebellion against his natural and lawful Prince, and takes up armes against him, under pretence of title to the Crown and Kingdom, as *Absalom* did against his Father *David*, 2 Sam. 15. Such an one will not content himself only with this, to thrust his Prince out of his Kingdom, and to put him from his Government, and to overthrow his Laws, that he may set up his own, but he will seek to deprive him of his life also. So is it with the remainder of sin that still abides in Gods Children, and with their rebellious lusts, they seek not onely as it were to depose grace, and to keep it under from ruling and reigning, but even to take away the life of it, and utterly to root it out; and they do violently and strongly oppose against it; And this is that which the Apostle *Peter* intends and means, when he saith, 1 Pet. 2. 11. that *fleshy lusts fight against the soul*, Dearly beloved (saith he) I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from *fleshy lusts which fight against the soul*. As if he had said, which oppose against that grace and goodnesse that is in the soul, and against the salvation and eternal good of the soul, even to strip it of all grace, that it may perish by sin; as Souldiers and enemies use to do, whose end and purpose in fighting, is to spoil and kill.

And to this purpose also speaks the Apostle, 1am. 4. 1. saith he, *Whence are warres and contentions among you? Are they not hence, even of your lusts that fight in your members*: that is, from those vile lusts that warr and fight in the powers of your souls, and in the parts and members of your bodies, and as Rebels do oppose and strive against that grace that is in you. And hence it is, that the Apostle compares himself and other Apostles and Ministers of the Gospel, to Souldiers fighting against sin and Satan, and saith, 2 Cor. 10. 4. That *the weapons of their warfare were not carnal, but mighty through God to cast down holds*: that is, the holds of sin and Satan. He compares sin and Satan to enemies entrenched, and lying within strong Towers, walls and holds, and so mightily opposing against grace and goodnesse; and he subjoynes Vers. 5. *Cast-ing down the imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the know-ledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought, even every rebellious thought, to the obedience of Christ*. Alluding, no doubt, to that, Jer. 1. 10. where the Lord saith to the Prophet, *Behold, this day I set thee over the Nations and over the Kingdomes, to pluck up, and to root out, and to destroy, and throw down, to build, and to plant*; We see then this made cleere by evidence of Scripture, that the corruption of nature that still in part abides in Gods children, is as a Rebel against the power of grace that is in them, and as a Rebel doth violently oppose and strive against it. And the reason of it is this.

**Reason.**

Grace and corruption are mingled together throughout, in every power and faculty of the soul of that person that is truly regenerate; as light and darknesse are mingled together in the dawning of the day, and as heat & cold are mingled together in luke-warme water. We know that luke-warme water is not in one part hot, and in another part of it cold, but it is hot in part, and cold in part throughout. and such a mixture is there of grace and corruption in them that are truly regenerate, and withall there is a flat contrariety between grace and corruption, and they are as contrary one to the other, as light and darknesse, and as fire and water; and therefore it must needs be, that the corruption of nature



nature, that ſtill in part abides in Gods children, doth as a Rebel violently and ſtrongly oppoſe and ſtrive againſt the power of grace that is in them, and it makes not a weak and feeble reſiſtance, but a mighty, ſtrong, and violent oppoſition againſt it, and the luſts that ariſe thence, do mightily war and rebel againſt the working, and the fruits of grace, as unbelief againſt faith, ignorance againſt knowledge, deſpair againſt hope, hypocriſie againſt ſingleneſſe of heart, pride againſt humility, and ſo in other particulars.

Now this being a truth, for uſe, it ſerves as a ground of admonition to all Gods children: hereupon they are to be warned and to be ſtirred up to ſet themſelves againſt the rebellion of their hearts, and the ſinful luſts that ariſe from their corruption, as againſt ſo many dangerous Rebels, yea, this muſt teach Gods children alwayes to ſtand on their guard, and to be watchful, for it is certain, that a child of God is no longer ſafe then while he is watchful. Will a King be ſecure and careleſſe, having many ſtrong Rebels up in arms againſt him in his own Kingdom, ſeeking to pull the Crown from his head? Surely no; If he tender his own ſafety he will not, but he will with all poſſible ſpeed ſeek to ſubdue them, and to bring them down, yea to take away their heads.

Thus muſt Gods children deal with the rebellious luſts of their own hearts: Doſt thou find in thee the luſt of Pride, of Envy, of Covetouſneſſe, of uncleaneſſe, or any other ſinful luſt riſing up and rebelling againſt that power of grace that is in thee? Oh ſeek and labour to ſubdue it, yea, to kill it, and to take away the life of it, and that with all poſſible ſpeed; ſuffer it not to harbour, and to reſt in thee, in hope hereafter to deal with it, and to overcome it. No; no; the longer thou doſt ſuffer it, the ſtronger it will be, and the more hard to over-maſter, yea it is a judgment of God on thee, if thou ſuffer a known luſt in thine heart, and uſe not means to ſubdue it, and to mortifie and po kill it: therefore betimes grapple with it, and ſeek to ſubdue it, and to take away the life of it. Haply thou wilt ſay, How is it to be done? How ſhall I ſubdue the Pride, the Envy, the Covetouſneſſe and Uncleanneſſe of mine own heart? I answer, To that purpoſe thou muſt do three things:

First, apply to thy ſelf Chriſt crucified, and reſt not, till thou art able to ſay that thou art crucified with Chriſt, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Gal. 2. 19.*

Secondly, ſeriously apply the Word of God, and eſpecially the Commandments and threatnings of God that are directly againſt thy luſts, to the ſeveral luſts of thine own heart: for the Word of God is the ſword of the Spirit to cut down ſin and corruption, *Ephes. 6. 17.*

Thirdly, be careful to avoid all occasions and means that may ſtirre up the ſinful motions and rebellious luſts of thy heart.

Theſe things muſt thou do, if thou wouldſt ſubdue the rebellion of thine own heart, and the ſinful luſts of it: and be thou careful to uſe theſe means, and ever remember this, that thou haſt a Rebel in thine own boſome, the corruption of thine own heart, and the ſinful luſts that are in thy heart, are as dangerous Rebels, they fight ſtrongly againſt that grace that is in thy ſoul, yea, againſt the eternal good and ſalvation of thy ſoul, yea, they ſeek to ſtrip it of all grace, that it may periſh by ſin. Therefore ſtand on thy guard, and betimes ſet thy ſelf againſt them, and labour by all good means to ſubdue them, and to mortifie them, and to take away the life of them; that is the duty of every child of God.

Again, for a ſecond uſe; Is it ſo, that the corruption of nature, that ſtill in part abides in Gods children, is as a Rebel againſt that power of grace that is in them, and as a Rebel, doth violently oppoſe againſt it? Then here is matter of comfort for thee whoſoever thou art, that art ever complaining of the rebellion of thine own heart. Oh, ſay ſome, I find the rebellion of my heart to be great and ſtrong, I have much ado with mine own heart, and I can hardly ſtand againſt the rebellious luſts of it. Is it thus with thee? Surely, then thy caſe is no other then the caſe of the holy Apoſtle, he ſaw a Law in his members, rebelling

Uſe 1.

Gods children muſt ſet themſelves againſt the rebellion of their hearts, and ſeek to ſubdue the rebellious luſts of their hearts.

How the rebellious luſts of the heart are to be ſubdued.

1.

2.

3.

Rejoice

Uſe 2.

Comfort to ſuch as are ever complaining of the rebellion of their own hearts.

God



ing against the Law of his mind. And thus it is with the best of Gods children: yea, comfort thy self in this, that the corruption of thy heart, and the sinful lusts of it, are as Rebels, opposing against the power of grace that is in thee:

Note.

*for being as Rebels, they shall be dealt with as Rebels; they shall never prosper: doubtlesse, God curseth Rebels, and sets himself against them. A Rebel against his natural Prince, whom doth he rise up against? Surely, not onely against his Prince, but against God also, in whose room that Prince standeth; and the Lord will not suffer such an one to prosper, but he will cut him short. And much more will the Lord cut short the rebellion of thy heart, thou being a child of God, and he will not suffer that to prosper. The corruption of thine heart, and the sinful lusts of it, are as Rebels: and against whom do they rebel and set themselves? Surely in special manner against God himself, against Christ, against his Crown and Dignity, and against the grace of his holy Spirit. Therefore certainly the Lord will not suffer them to prosper, but in the end he will overturn them and bring them to nought.*

The corruption of thy heart that still in part abides in thee, and the sinful lusts of it, may for a time molest and trouble thee, opposing against that grace that is in thee: yet know this to thy comfort, they shall never wholly vanquish and overcome that grace. No, no; they vex and trouble thee unjustly, and as Rebels, they oppose against that grace that is in thee, and they shall be sure to be put to the worst in the end. Satan fought against Christ, but he took the foil: and so sin, that fights against the grace of Christ in his members, shall be foyled in the end, and that grace of Christ and power of his Spirit shall at length wholly overcome it, and utterly destroy it. Let that be thy comfort, and think on it to thy comfort.

Now here a question is to be answered, occasioned from this that the *Apostle* saith, he saw another law in his members, rebelling against the Law of his mind. I will briefly propound and answer it. The question is this;

Quest.

Whether the Child of God may sin of Rebellion, or sin rebelliously or no? This question some move.

Answ.

And to this I answer, That doubtlesse a Child of God may sin of rebellion, or may rebelliously in part, not wholly, as the wicked do, and as *Saul* did, to whom *Samuel* said, 1 Sam. 15. 23. *Rebellion is as the sin of Witchcraft, and transgression is wickednesse and Idolatry.* Gods Children cannot so sin of Rebellion, and in that degree rebelliously, but in part they may, and there is ground for it from this Text; for there is in the best of Gods Children that live on the face of the earth, the law of their members rebelling against the Law of their mind, and leading them captive unto the Law of sin, which is in their members; there is rebellion in their corrupt flesh throughout in part, in their minds, wills and affections, and that over-carries them sometimes to the doing of evil, yea, as the *Apostle* addes, it leads them captive to the law of sin, yea, to the doing of some foule evil, as we read of *David*, *Peter*, and others. And such as the proper cause is, such must needs be the effect: and therefore the proper cause of that evil that is done by them, being the inward rebellion of their minds, wills and affections, the evil that is done by them, coming from thence, especially being a foule evil, it must needs be, that it is done in part rebelliously, and is in some degree a sin of rebellion. *Dan 9. 5.* The Prophet saith plainly, *We have rebelled.* And *Vers. 9.* *Albeit we have rebelled.* That was but in the general confession of sin.

Object.

Answ.

Doctrine 6.

The combat that is in Gods children, is between grace and corruption, and that combat is proper to Gods children.

Doubtlesse, he confessed the truth. I would but ask this question: May not a Child of God sometimes sin against knowledg and conscience? Without question he may; and therefore rebelliously. Yea, but say some, not against knowledg in that particular act? Yes, even in that particular act, he not resisting the lust of his heart, but giving way to it, nourishing it and consenting to it in his will that over-carries him even against his knowledg, sometimes to do some foule evil: this was the case of *David*, *Peter*, and others: and therefore, doubtlesse, a Child of God may sin of rebellion, or rebelliously, sometimes in part, not wholly.

We



We are further to mark, that the *Apostle* ſaith, *The law in his members rebelled againſt the Law of his mind.* The remainder of ſin that ſtill abode in him, warred and fought againſt the power of grace that was in him, and ſo the fight and war that was in him, was between corruption and grace. And thus indeed it is in the Children of God, and ſuch as are truly regenerate; there is in them a ſtrong fight and bitter combate between corruption and grace; the fleſh and the Spirit are at continual war and enmity, and they fight and ſtrive one againſt the other in the Children of God, that is the fight and combate that is in them. And the combat between the fleſh and the Spirit is proper to Gods Children, and ſuch as are truly regenerate, it is found in them alone. Unregenerate perſons are not acquainted with it, they know not what it means. And therefore the *Apoſtle* ſpeaking of it, *Gal. 5. 17.* he doth appropriate it to ſuch as have the Spirit of grace and ſanctification, and are able to walk in the Spirit. He ſaith in the Verſe before, *16. Walk in the Spirit, and ye ſhall not fulfill the luſts of the fleſh.* And then he ſubjoyns, *For the fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh, and theſe are contrary one to the other.*

Indeed unregenerate perſons may have a kind of fight and combate in them, and doubtleſſe there is ſometimes a kind of fight in the wicked, but it is either between the appetite and reaſon, the appetite, and ſenſe, and natural paſſions fighting and warring againſt reaſon: or it is between ſin and the conſcience enlightened by the light of nature, and by the Word of God, the conſcience carrying in it the light of nature, and that light being not extinguished, nor weakened by ſin, it ſmites, and checks and controlls the motions of ſin, and it doth warn and accuſe men when they do any evil againſt that light, as *Rom. 2. 15.* the *Apoſtle* ſaith, *The Gentiles ſhew the effect of the Law, written in their hearts, their conſcience alſo bearing witneſſe, and their thoughts accuſing one another, or excuſing;* There is one of theſe two ſorts of fight and combate in ſuch as be yet unregenerate: but as for the fight between the fleſh and the Spirit, and between grace and corruption, they are not acquainted with it, they have no experience of it, becauſe indeed they have not the Spirit, they have not ſanctified grace in them, but they are wholly within and without fleſh, corruption and ſin. And as *Chriſt* ſaith of Satan, *Luke 11. 18.* that *he is not divided againſt himſelf:* ſo it may be truly ſaid, that ſin is not divided againſt ſin, and fleſh is not divided againſt fleſh. Therefore I ſay, unregenerate perſons are altogether unacquainted with the fight that is between the fleſh and the Spirit, and between grace and corruption; that is only found in Gods Children, and ſuch as are truly regenerate, and they that find it in themſelves, may conclude that they are regenerate.

Haply ſome will ſay, How ſhall we diſtinguiſh the combat that is between the appetite and reaſon, or between ſin and the natural light of conſcience, from the fight that is between the fleſh and the Spirit, and between grace and corruption, how ſhall we put a difference between them?

I answer the difference between them; The combate between the appetite and reaſon, or between ſin and the natural light of conſcience, is in ſeveral and diſtinct faculties of the ſoul; in that combate, one faculty of the ſoul is carried againſt another, the appetite againſt reaſon, the affections againſt conſcience: but the combate between the fleſh and the Spirit, between grace and corruption, is in one and the ſame power and faculty of the ſoul; in that combate the mind is carried againſt it ſelf, and the will againſt it ſelf, and the affections againſt themſelves: becauſe they are partly ſpiritual, and partly carnal: and thou ſhalt know that this combate is in thee by this eſpecially; If thou find thine heart carried againſt it ſelf, even againſt its own liking, in reſpect of thy beſt-pleaſing ſin; if thou find in thy ſelf a true diſlike and a loathing of that ſin thou waſt inclined to by nature; that is a ſure note, that there is ſanctifying grace in thy heart; and by this try thy ſelf.

Now in the laſt place obſerve we, that the *Apoſtle* ſpeaking of the power of grace

The fight and combate that is ſometimes in unregenerate perſons.

Difference between the combate that is in Gods Children, and that which is in unregenerate perſon.

How we may know, that the combat that is in us, is between grace & corruption.



grace that was in his whole inner man, in his regenerate part, he calls it the law of his mind: *I ſee another law in my members, rebelling againſt the Law of my mind.* He gives to it the name and title of a Law. Hence we are given to underſtand thus much:

*Doct. 7.*  
Sanctifying  
grace hath a  
great ſtroke &  
power in Gods  
Children, in  
their whole  
inner man.

That the grace of Regeneration that is in Gods Children and in true Believers, is as a Law in them, and it hath a great ſtroke and power in them: ſanctifying grace is as a Law that rules, and governs, and commands in Gods Children, in their whole inner man, in their regenerate part throughout; ſo far forth as Gods Children be regenerate, ſanctifying Grace hath the rule, and government, and command of them in all the powers of their ſouls, and in all the parts and members of their bodies: for why? It is in every Child of God in his meaſure, as it was with the Apoſtle, who ſaith of himſelf, *Gal. 2. 20. Thus I live, yet not I now, but Chriſt liveth in me, and in that I now live in the fleſh, I live by faith in the Son of God.*

Thus it is with every Child of God, Chriſt lives in him, and he lives by faith in Chriſt. Yea the Apoſtle puts it down in the general, *Gal. 3. 11. The juſt ſhall live, or lives by faith:* every juſt and holy perſon lives by faith, true ſaving faith and ſanctifying grace, is the guide of his life, and all his thoughts, words, and works are guided, ordered and governed by it. And hence it was, that David ſaid, *Pſal. 16. 7. that his reins did teach him in the night.* And to this purpoſe ſpeaks the Prophet, *Iſai. 30. 21. Thine ear ſhall hear a word behind thee, ſaying, This is the way, walk ye in it.* As if he had ſaid, Thou ſhalt have one within thee to guide and to govern thee, even the Spirit of grace and ſanctification. And this is that the Lord promiſed to his people, *Jer. 31. 33. that he would put his Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.* And ſo his Law written in the Book of God, ſhould be alſo a Law written in their hearts, and in their inward parts. Which plainly and ſtrongly confirms the truth of the point in hand, that the grace of Regeneration is as a Law in Gods Children, and as a Law it rules and governs, and commands in their regenerate part; ſo far forth as they be regenerate, it hath the command of them in all the powers of their ſouls, and in all the parts and members of their bodies: and the reaſon and ground of it is this,

*Reason.*

In the regenerate part, and ſo far forth as Gods Children be regenerate, the grace that is in them, is even *the life of God, Ephes. 4. 18.* and it is the power of the Spirit of Chriſt, even the power of the Spirit that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, called *The vertue of his Reſurrection, Phil. 3. 10.* And therefore it muſt needs be ſtrong and powerful, and as a Law ruling and commanding in their regenerate part, and that throughout in all the powers of their ſoules, and in all the parts and members of their bodies.

*Uſe 1.*  
That opinion  
of the Papists,  
that men can-  
not know  
whether they  
have faith  
ſanctifying  
grace in them,  
or no, confu-  
ted.

Now then for uſe. Firſt, this being a truth, it meets with an errour and falſe opinion of the Papists, who hold and teach, that a man cannot know whether he have faith and ſanctifying grace in him or no, when they are preſſed with it, that a true Believer may be aſſured of his own ſalvation, by the teſtimony of the Spirit of grace in his heart: becauſe *as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the ſons of God, Rom. 8. 14.* They answer, that a man cannot know whether he have faith and grace in him, or no. This opinion of theirs cannot ſtand with the truth now delivered: for why? Is ſanctifying grace ſtrong and powerful in Gods Children, and as a Law ruling and commanding in them? It is even the life of God in them, and the power of the Spirit of Chriſt in them. Is it ſo? and yet is it not perceived by them? Surely it is not poſſible, it cannot be, but that they muſt needs know it and feel it in themſelves.

*Object.*

Yea, but (ſay they) it is in your own doctrine, That a man may have faith, and not feel it; you teach, That a man muſt not go by feeling, but by belie-  
ving.

*Anſw.*

It is true indeed; we teach, That a man may have faith, and not feel it ſome-  
times; as in ſome great trouble and diſtreſſe of conſcience, when the conſcience  
of



of a true Believer feels nothing but ſin, and judgeth God angry with him, we teach, In ſuch a caſe not to follow the ſenſe of mans own heart; but to ſtick to the Word of God, which ſaith, that God looks to the afflicted, and ſuch as are troubled in Spirit, and broken in heart, and that *Chriſt turnes not away his face from ſuch as labour under the burden of their ſins, but refresheth them, Mat. 11. 28.*

But doth it hereupon follow, that a true Believer can never feel grace in himſelf? No, no; that is no good conſequent: doubtleſſe, a Child of God, out of the caſe of great trouble, or diſtreſſe of conſcience, may know and feel ſanctifying grace ſtrong and powerful in him, and as a law ruling and commanding in his regenerate part.

And ſo for a ſecond uſe of the point. Is it ſo, that ſanctifying grace is ſtrong and powerful in Gods Children? Is it as a Law ruling and commanding in their regenerate part, and that throughout in their minds, wills, and in all the powers of their ſoules, and in all the parts and members of their bodies? Surely then it cannot be, that a child of God ſhould make a common practice of any known ſin, he hath a Law within him, that commands him to the contrary, and that Law will not ſuffer him ſo to do.

And if a Child of God fall into any ſin, he falls not into it with full conſent of will, the Law of grace that is in him, checks him, and controlls him, and will not ſuffer him to yeeld full conſent of will to the doing of any known evil; yea, on the ground of Doctrine now delivered, it followes, that as many as are Gods Children, they yeeld willing and ready obedience to the will of God, made known to them, they are ſuch as are ſpoken of, *Pſal. 110. 3.* They ſerve God, not of constraint, but willingly, as if there were no Law to compel them: for why? the Law of God written, and the Law of their hearts is all one in ſubſtance; the Law of God is written in their hearts, and the Law of grace, even the grace of Regeneration, is ſtrong and powerful in them, and as a Law it rules and commands in their regenerate part throughout, it commands not only their minds, but their wills alſo, ſo far forth as they be regenerate, and ſo they are made free and voluntary in yeelding obedience to God, and they obey God willingly and readily, according to that meaſure of grace that is in them.

And take this for a certain truth, that according to the meaſure of ſanctifying grace in any man or woman, ſo is the meaſure of their willingneſſe and readineſſe in doing good things. If thou wilt do no more good then thou art compelled to do: for example; If thou wilt not keep the Sabbath, and ſanctifie it further then thou art compelled by mans Law, thou art but a formal Hypocrite. And ſo for evil things; If thou wilt abſtain from evil, no further then thou art reſtrained by the Lawes of men, as it is with the moſt, when they are told of Swearing, Rayling, Sabbath-breaking: Oh, ſay they, I hope it is no hanging matter, it is neither Felony nor Treason; and therefore they make no bones of it. If it be thus with thee, thou art but a graceleſſe Wretch, whoſoever thou art: thou haſt no dram of ſanctifying grace in thee. Gods children will not break the Sabbath: and why? Grace over-rules them, and is as a Law to them, yea, according to the meaſure of grace that is in them, they willingly keep the Sabbath, and yeeld obedience to God in all his Commandements.

And hereby try thy ſelf; If thou have ſanctifying grace in thee, thou art ready and willing to do good things, thou art not haled and drawn to do good, but thou doſt it willingly and of a ready mind, and from thy willingneſſe to do good things, thou mayſt gather and conclude, that thou haſt ſanctifying grace in thine heart: and by this try thy ſelf.

Now here a Cavil of the Anabaptiſts is to be met withal: ſay they, Sanctifying Grace is as a Law to Gods Children, and as a Law it rules, and governs, and commands them: and therefore they need not the Laws of men to govern them?

Uſe 2.

A Child of God cannot make a common practice of any known ſin.

Gods children yeeld willing and ready obedience to the will of God revealed to them.

A Cavil of the Anabaptiſts answered.

The answer is eaſie: If Gods Children were ſanctified perfectly, and had a perfection



perfection of grace and ſanctification, then in reſpect of themſelves they ſhould not need the Laws of men to govern them : but alas, there is no ſuch matter : they are ſanctified but in part, in time of this life. Again the viſible Church of God contains as well Hypocrites and Wicked men, as true Believers : therefore the beſt Churches need Magiſtracy for the puniſhment of evil doers, and for the protection of the Church and Gods Children : therefore the reaſon is naught, that ſanctifying grace is as a Law to Gods Children, and therefore they need not the Laws of men.

Come we now to the ſecond part of this Verſe, in the words following : *And leading me captive to the Law of ſin, which is in my members.* In theſe words, our *Apoſtle* makes known to us the iſſue and ſucceſſe of the reſiſtance and rebelling of the remainder of ſin, that ſtill abode in him, againſt the power of grace that was in him, as namely, that the ſucceſſe of it was this : That he was thereby brought under the power of ſin, and made to yeeld to ſin : which the *Apoſtle* (ſtill continuing his former Metaphor and ſimilitude, taken from war or fighting) delivers under theſe terms, that *he was led captive to ſin* : and he ſets down the power of ſin as before, under the word *Law*. *Leading me captive to the Law of ſin.* And that is further amplified by the ſubject of it, *in his members, and leading me captive to the Law of ſin which is in my members.*

Interpretation

Let us a little examine theſe words, that we may find out the true ſenſe and meaning of them, *And leading me captive*, in this word : for it is but one word in the Original, or in this Phraſe and form of ſpeech, (*Leading captive.*) The *Apoſtle* alludes to the manner of great and mighty Conquerors in war, ſuch as have gotten the victory over their enemies, and are wont to lead them whom they have taken alive, as priſoners faſt bound and tyed, and to keep them under their power as Vaffals and Slaves.

To this the *Apoſtle* here hath reſpect, and his meaning is, that ſin riſing up in rebellion againſt the power of grace that was in him, and warring and fighting againſt it, ſometimes it prevailed againſt grace, and ſometimes it overcame him, and as it were took him priſoner, and carried him away like a captive, and as a vanquiſhed man (*to the Law of ſin.*) The word (*Law*) is here put, as before, to ſignifie the power of ſin, and by *ſinne*, we are to underſtand the corruption of nature, even the remainder of ſin that ſtill abode in the *Apoſtle*, together with the evil motions and luſts ariſing from thence. And therefore he adds, *which is in my members* : or as it is in the Original, *which hath exiſtence and being in my members.* As if he had ſaid, To the force and to the power of ſin which hath an actual being in my members, and the evil motions and luſts of it. By (*members*) we are to underſtand, as before, all the powers of the ſoul, and all the parts and members of the body.

Thus then conceive we the meaning of theſe words, *And leading me captive to the Law of ſin which is in my members.*

As if the *Apoſtle* had ſaid, *And ſometimes prevailing againſt that grace that is in me, and overcoming me, and by the ſtrength of it getting victory over me, and carrying me as a captive, and as a vanquiſhed man, and bringing me under the force and power of that corruption that ſtill in part abides in me, and to the power of the evil motions and luſts of it, which luſts have their actual being in all the powers of my ſoul, and in all the parts and members of my body.*

Come we to the matter of obſervation and doctrine ; and firſt, in that the *Apoſtle* ſaith, The remainder of ſin that ſtill abode in him, rebelled, fought and warred againſt the power of grace that was in him, and ſometimes prevailed againſt it, and led him as a captive, and brought him under the power of ſin.

We are to take notice how it is with the beſt of Gods Children ſometimes, namely thus :

Doct. 8.

That the beſt of Gods children, the moſt holy, and the moſt regenerate that live in the world, have not onely ſin in part abiding in them, and fighting, and warring againſt that power of grace that is in them, but ſometimes prevailing againſt



against that grace, and getting the upper hand of it; sin that abides in Gods children in part, though it do not for ever, and wholly overcome the grace that is in them, that is not possible, yet sometimes in part and for a time, it gets the victory over it, and doth conquer it, and as it leads away a child of God, as a captive under the power of it. We read, *Exod. 17. 11.* that in the battel that was between *Israel* and *Amalek*, while *Moses* held up his hand, *Israel* prevailed, but when he let his hand down, *Amalek* prevailed: So it is in the fight and combate between Grace and Sin in Gods Children: the victory and conquest is sometimes on one part, and sometimes on the other; sometimes Grace is too strong for sin, and bears down the motions of it, and keeps them under: and sometimes again Sin is too strong for Grace, and bears it down in part for a time, and so far prevails over it, as sometimes it carries a child of God as a captive to it, and to the lusts of it, and by the strength of it drawes him to the doing of some evil.

Though the remainder of sin still abiding in Gods children, do not for ever and wholly overcome the grace that is in them, yet sometimes in part and for a time it gets victory over it.

And to this purpose we have many examples in the Book of God, as of *Noah*, of *Lot*, of *Abraham*, of *Moses*, of *David*, of *Peter*, and others. And doubtlesse, Gods children are able to witnesse this to be a truth, out of their own experience, though it be to their grief. Yea, if we observe it, we shall find, that sin abiding in Gods children, hath sometimes strangely prevailed over the power of grace that was in them, and strangely overcarried them, yea, the very best of them: as, have they not been strangely over-carried and led away by their own corruption, when they have cast forth doubtful speeches, touching Gods grace and favour towards them, as if God had forsaken them, and quite cast them out of his sight, and shut up his love from them, and reckoned them as enemies?

Thus it was with *David*, *Psal. 77. 7, 8, 9.* Will the Lord absent himself for ever? and will he shew no more favour? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for ever? Hath God forgotten to be merciful? Hath he shut up his tender mercies in displeasure? And was not *Job*, that dear servant and child of God, strangely over-carried by the strength of his own corruption, when he cursed the time and moneths of his life? *Iob 3. 3, to 13.* And the like did the holy Prophet *Jeremiah*, *Jer. 20. 14, 15.* Cursed be the day wherein I was born, and let not the day wherein my mother bare me, be blessed. And *Jer. 12. 1.* he reasons the case with God, as if the Lord were not righteous in his administration and government of the world, because of the great prosperity of the wicked. And thus did *David*, *Psal. 73. 13, 14.*

Thus have these holy servants and children of God been strangely over-carried by the strength of their own corruption; and it plainly proves the point in hand, That sin that abides in Gods children in part, sometimes prevails over that grace that is in them, and so overcomes it, and conquers it, and so sometimes it leads them away under the power of it, to the acting of some evil. And the reason of it is this,

The grace that is in Gods children, is upheld by the assisting hand and power of God, it is the hand and power of God that continually upholds it, and keeps it from failing, it is of a failing nature in it self, and were it not continually upheld by the hand of God, it would fail.

Reasons

Now the Lord is pleased sometimes for causes known to himself, a little to withdraw his assisting hand from that grace that is in Gods children: and thence it is that sometimes sin that abides in them, prevails over it, and overcomes it in part, and for a time, and that sometimes it leads even the best of Gods children, as captives under the power of it, to the doing of some evil. This then being a truth,

\* Use it.

Gods children are to be marvellous heedfull to themselves, and to live in continual mistrust of their own corruption, still in part abiding in them.

\* It may serve as a ground of admonition to every one of us, though we be the children of God, and have a great measure of grace in us, yet this may admonish us to be marvellous heedfull to our selves, and to live in continual mistrust of the corruption that still in part abides in us, and to watch it narrowly, lest



it should overcarry us to the doing of evil : for why ? Is it so, that the best of Gods children, even the Lords Worthies, as I may justly call them, *David, Peter, Paul*, and such stout Champions and valiant Captains as these, have been sometimes taken prisoners of sin, and carried away as captives under the power of their own corruption ? Is it thus sometimes with the best of Gods Children ? Oh then, what need have we that are but as common Souldiers, yea, but as Shrimps and poor weaklings, in respect of them, what need (I say) have we to live in fear and trembling, and in continual mistrust of the corruption of our own hearts, and narrowly to watch it, that we be not over-carried by it to the doing of evil ?

And let us know this, that be we as watchful as possibly we can, yet sometimes the corruption that still in part abides in us, will bear down the grace that is in us, and will sometimes vanquish it in part, and sometimes bring us under the power of sin. And therefore it concerns us to look to the corruption of our own hearts : and when thou feelest any evil motion, any stirring to evil in thy heart, labour to stop it and to stifle it in the beginning, nip it in the very bud ; if thou give way to it, and suffer it to get head, it will bear down that grace that is in thee, though thou have a great measure of grace : and therefore, I say, stop it in the beginning, and know this, *“that the Devil cannot draw thee to the doing of any evil, but by the consent of thine own heart, he hath no power to enforce thee to sinne ; but a sleight he hath to perswade thee to it, neither can he bring thee to the acting of sin at the first, but by conveying sin into thine heart by little and little ; therefore watch over thine own heart, and when any evil motion riseth up in it, set thy self against it, and suffer it not to gain the consent of thy will : if thou do, it will bear down the grace that is in thee, and bring thee under the power of it, to the doing of evil.”*

Note.

Use. 2  
Men are not to presume upon the strength of grace that is in them, for the avoiding of sin.

Again, Is it so, that the best of Gods children, and the most holy that live in this world, have not only sin in part abiding in them, fighting and warring against the power of grace that is in them, but sometimes prevailing against that grace, and getting the victory over it, and leading them as captives under the power of it ? Let no man then deceive himself, let no man presume on the strength of grace that is in him, for the avoiding of sin : let none think that he hath in him such strength of grace, as that no temptation can take hold of him, especially that he cannot be drawn on any foul and grosse sin. If any so think, he deceives himself, and those are too bold and too fool-hardy, that tire themselves like wantons, and follow the fashions of the world, or keep company unnecessarily with wicked persons, and yet think or say, Tush, they shall take no hurt by them, and think that they have such strength of grace, as that they shall not be tainted with any of their sins. Surely, such persons know not themselves, they are unacquainted with the corruption of their own hearts. *Peter* thought himself strong enough to stand out, and that he had grace sufficient to carry him out, when he said, *Matth. 26. 33. Though all men should be offended by thee, yet will I never be offended.* We know what followed : He going into the High Priests Hall, and sitting there at the fire, he was overtaken, and he denyed his Master. And art thou stronger then *Peter* ? No, no ; presume not on thine strength for the avoiding of any sin, but labour thou to be strong in the power of the Lord, *Ephes. 6. 10.* Seek to him, and sue to him for strength of grace, and especially when thou goest into the throng of the world to a feast, to the market, or the like. Last of all ; Is it so, that the best and the most holy that live in the world, have not only sin in part abiding in them, but sometimes also prevailing against that grace, that is in them, and getting the victory over it, and carrying them as captives under the power of it, to the doing of evil ?

\* Use 3.  
Comfort for such as are sometimes overcome by the strength of their own corruption, to the doing of evil against their purpose.

\* Here is then matter of comfort for thee, whosoever thou art, that art sometimes overborn by the strength of thine own corruption, against thy purpose, to the doing of some evil ; thy case is no other then the case of the best of Gods Children.

Thus



Thus it hath been with *Paul*, *Peter*, and divers others; they have been sometimes, as it were, taken prisoners, and carried away as captives by their own corruption, to the doing of evil, and yet still were they the children of God, though they shrunk away from God in part, yet he never took his love from them: and so it is with thee, though thou fall away from God in part by thy sin, yet thou art still within the compasse of his love; and he will reach out his hand to thee, and raise thee up again. It is a comfort to a man that is false into some grievous disease, when he hears that others have been sick of the same disease, and yet have recovered. So let it cheer thee up, when thou art sometimes led as a captive against thy purpose, to the doing of some evil, that thy betters have been so, and yet have done well, and were still the children of God. Think on that to thy comfort.

Now before I leave the point delivered, I think it needful to answer a question that haply some may move (namely) this;

Some may demand why the Lord suffers his children sometimes to be overtaken by grosse sins? The Lord bears special love to his children, and out of the abundance of his love towards them, he is ready to do them good at all times, and he is able to free them from sin altogether: why then doth the Lord suffer his children not only to slip and fall in good duties, but sometimes to be carried as captives under the power of their own corruption, still in part abiding in them, to the doing of some foul and grosse evil, as he did *Noah*, *Lot*, *David*, *Peter*, and others? what should be the reason of that?

I answer; This the Lord doth in great wisdom, and for special good causes, he being able to draw good out of the greatest evil, as (namely) for the magnifying of his mercy towards his children, in passing by and pardoning their great offences, and to make them more thankful to him, for the abundance of his grace and mercy vouchsafed unto them, having gotten the pardon of such sins: yea, even by the grosse sins of his children it pleaseth God (Which indeed is admirable:) yet so it is, it pleaseth God to do his children good, as thereby to humble them not only for the sin which now they are false into, but it may be also for some other sin, whereof they were formerly guilty, and have not thoroughly repented of, even by the sin now lying upon them, to make them more seriously to think on that sin, and to be further humbled for it, and thereby also to work in them more fear and warinesse for the time to come, and to make them take more heed of Satans sleights, and to gather more strength against him; as we may see in *David*, who after his fall into Adultery and Murder, being recovered, was able to bear the cursing of *Shimei*, when *Shimei* barked at him like a dog, he let all passe in the Spirit of meeknesse, 2 Sam. 16. 10.

And so, through the wonderful wisdom and goodnesse of God, the grosse sins of his children turn greatly to their good, even to be as medicines for sins past, and preventions of sins to come; yea, we may observe, that the Lord often suffers such to fall, as he hath ordained for excellent use in the Church, as he did *Jonas* and *Peter*, to this end, that they may be the more humbled, and more fit to minister comfort to others afterward, that they may comfort others with the comfort, wherewith themselves have been comforted of the Lord, 2 Cor. 1. 4. and may be better able to strengthen others, as Christ said to *Peter*, Luke 22. 32. When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

For these and the like good causes doth the Lord suffer his dear children, sometimes to be carried as captives under the power of their own corruption, to do some foul evil.

Now proceed we; you may remember, in that the *Apostle* here saith, he was led captive unto the law of sinne which was in his members: hence also an argument was gathered to conclude the *Apostles* Regeneration, that therefore he was a man truly regenerate, because he was led captive to the law of sin.

Now against this, objection is made by some. Say they, This is no good argument

Quest.

Ans.  
Why the Lord sometimes suffers his children to be overtaken by grosse sins.

Obje.



argument to prove the Apostles regeneration, that *he was led captive to the law of sin*. For why? The Apostle saith of such as are yet in their natural state and condition, 2 Tim. 2. 26. that *they are in the snare of the devil, and taken and held of him as captives at his will*.

*Ans.*  
Two sorts of  
captivity in  
respect of sin.

To this I answer, there be two sorts of captivity in respect of sin; one, when men are wholly captived under the power of their own corruption, and that voluntarily; a voluntary captivity; and of that the Apostle speaks, 2 Tim. 2. 26. and the other is, a forced captivity, when men are led as captives by the strength of their own corruption, and brought under the power of it in part, and that unwillingly, and against their purpose; and that may befall such as are truly regenerate: and of that the Apostle here speaks, and so it still remains a true note of his Regeneration, that *he was led captive to the Law of sin*.

*Doct. 9:*  
The difference  
between the  
regenerate &  
unregenerate,  
in regard of  
their captivity  
to sin.

Now the point hence offered is this,

That there is a plain difference between the regenerate and the unregenerate, in respect of their captivity to sin, as (namely) thus: Such as are truly regenerate, are sometimes in part captived, and brought under the power of their own corruption; but it is unwillingly, and their captivity under the power of sin is forced, and it is with a feeling of their bondage, and an earnest desire to be freed from their captivity: but it is far otherwise with unregenerate persons, they freely and with full consent of will, put themselves under the power of their vile lusts, and their captivity under sinne is voluntary, and they have no feeling of their bondage: no, they suspect it not, much lesse do they truly desire liberty and freedom from it.

We know, that a Prince will not willingly be led away captive of a Rebel; and if he be taken by the hands of a Rebel, it is against his will, and he is never well, till he be freed: but a base fellow, one of mean condition, and a debased wretch, of a wretched life and conversation, he will easily joyn hands with a Rebel, and willingly suffer himself to be led by him to the same Rebellion, and take pleasure in it: so is it in this case; one that is born anew of the Spirit, will not willingly be led away as a captive by his rebelling flesh, and if sometimes he be surpris'd, and overcome by the lusts of it, it is against his will, and he desires to be freed from that captivity, yea, he takes any opportunity that is offered, to be freed from it, as *Peter* did on the crowing of the Cock, *Matth. 26. 75.* and on *Christ* his looking back on him, *Luke 22. 61.* and as *David* did, so soon as ever the Lord sent the Prophet *Nathan* to him, 2 *Sam. 12. 13.*

But on the other side, one that is wholly carnal, and as yet in his base condition of nature, he willingly puts forth his hand to sin, and he yields to the evil motions and lusts of his own heart, and is led by them without resistance, yea, he takes pleasure in them, as the Apostle saith of the Gentiles, *Ephes. 4. 19.* *He gives himself to work wickednesse, even with greedinesse, he drinks iniquity like water, Job 15. 16. and drawes sinne as with a cartrope* *Isaiah 5. 18.*

Thus stands the difference between the regenerate and the unregenerate, in respect of their captivity to sin: The regenerate, they are sometimes taken and led as captives under the power of their own corruption, but it is unwillingly, and they are weary of that bondage: But unregenerate persons they make themselves vassals and slaves to the lusts of their own hearts, and they yield to them with full consent of will, and they willingly fight under the banner of sin and Satan, against God, and against his Word: and the ground of this difference is this:

*Reason.*

Because there is grace in the one, and none in the other; the regenerate have in them a measure of sanctifying grace, and the unregenerate have none, they are wholly flesh, and nothing but a lump of sin. Now then, to make use of this difference,

First,



First, this may serve to discover unto us, who they be that sin of infirmity, who they be that may truly plead infirmity in sinning, and may truly say, It is of weaknesse that sometimes they fall into sin. Surely only the children of God, and such as are truly regenerate: for why? they only are led captives under the power of sin unwillingly, and they only are sometimes overcome of the lusts of their own hearts, not because they are willing to yeeld to them, but because they are weak to resist them, and are sometimes surpris'd by the deceitfulnesse of sin, and by the sleights of Satan.

Unregenerate persons cannot truly plead infirmity in sinne, though indeed sometimes the base Drunkard, and the most filthy person that lives in the world, will plead infirmity, and say, Oh, his sinne is his infirmity, and you must bear with him, it is his infirmity. Poor soules! They deceive themselves; can that be said to be a sin of infirmity, which they rush into with full consent of will, and with much pleasure give themselves unto? No, no; if they so think, they deceive themselves: that is a sin of weaknesse and infirmity, when men purpose and resolve against it, strive against it, pray against it, and use all good means to keep them from it; and yet sometimes they are over-carried by the strength of their own corruption, and do sometimes unwillingly fall into it, and that is proper to the unregenerate; and therefore let no unregenerate person plead his infirmity in sinning.

Again, for a second use: Let the difference between the regenerate and the unregenerate, in respect of their captivity to sin, be a ground of tryal to every one of us. We have often in this chapter had occasion to urge it in the substance of it: in a word therefore to presse it,

Hereby try thy self, whosoever thou art, in what state and condition thou art, whether in the state of grace, or in the state of nature. Dost thou find that thou art sometimes captived and brought under the power of thine own corruption, but yet unwillingly, and thou wouldst not be brought under the power of it, and thy captivity to sin is forced, and thou hast a feeling of thy bondage, and it is grievous to thee, and thou desirest to be freed from it, and being over-carried by the strength of thy corruption, to the doing of evil, thou never art quiet till thou hast recovered thy self? Is it thus with thee? Surely, then thou maist hereupon conclude, to the comfort of thine own soul, that thou art truly regenerate and in the state of grace.

But on the other side, if so be thou be ready to put forth thine hand to sin, and thou doest yeeld to the lusts of thine own heart willingly, and takest pleasure in fulfilling them, and it is even meat and drink to thee to do evil, yea, thou rushest into sin, *as a hard horse into the battel*, *Ier. 8. 6.* and thou art such a one as Christ speaks of, *Joh. 8. 44. the lusts of the Devil thou doest*; for thy sinful lusts are his lusts, he desires thou shouldst fulfill them; thou doest evil things, and thou wilt do them; as many there be of that sort, they do wickedly, and they will do it, and what hath any man to do with them? If it be thus with thee, deceive not thy self; certainly thou art yet in the dregges of nature, thou art a captive and slave to thine own lusts, thou art willing so to be, and thou art under the power of the Devil, and held of him at his will and pleasure: and that is a miserable captivity.

One thing yet remains to be noted. The Apostle saith, *leading me captive to the Law of sin*: (that is) to the power of sin, and the evil lusts rising from thence, And he addes, *which is in my members*: which hath existence and being in my members: whence note we,

That the corruption of nature sends forth evil lusts, which have an actual being in the powers and faculties of the soul. And therefore doubtlesse it is not as some have thought, a meere privation, a meere absence of holinesse and righteousness: but it is a positive thing, and hath a real being, and indeed it is the mother-sin, as *James* speaks, and all sins that are committed are not done by imitation, as *Pelagius* his followers thought; neither is it true, that children

Use 1.

Who they be that may truly plead infirmity in sinning.

Use 2.

Tryall whether men be in the state of grace, or in the state of nature.

Doctrine 10

The corruption of nature hath a real being.

do



The duty of  
Parents to-  
wards their  
Children.

do live only by imitation, and because they see or hear other do evil. No no: there is a root of bitterness that hath a real being in children, even a *bundle of folly bound up in their hearts*, Prov. 22:15. and that gives being to all the evils they commit. And Parents are to take notice of it, and to labour by instruction, admonition, counsel, reproof, and reasonable correction to drive it out, and to endeavour by all good means to weaken the image of the old man in their children, and to labour to have them changed and transformed daily more and more, into the blessed Image of Jesus Christ,

VERS. 24.

*O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!*



Our *Apostle* having at large laid forth the Spiritual Combat, the Combate between the flesh and the Spirit, from the fourteenth Verse, to this four and twentieth, here he concludes and shuts up his speech touching that matter, with an *Epiphonema*, with an exclamation; he breaks out and saith, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!*

Now this exclamation, for the matter and substance of it, contains the issue and successe of the conflict that is between the flesh and the Spirit, in them that are truly regenerate, that they are thereby brought to feel themselves wretched and miserable, and to bewail their wretchednesse, and to complain of it, and to desire deliverance from it, which the *Apostle* delivers, still insisting in his own person: *O wretched man that I am* (saith he) *who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* And to this exclamation or complaint he subjoynes a consolation, in respect of freedom and deliverance in and through Christ, for which he gives thanks to God, Vers. 25. in the beginning of it, *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* And to that he addes a conclusion of all, briefly repeating the summe and substance of the spirituall conflict, still giving instance of it in his own person in the words following: *Then I my self in my minde serve the Law of God, but in my flesh the Law of sin.* Of these things in order.

*O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

Here first the *Apostle* complains of his wretchednesse, and bewails it out of a true sense and feeling of it. *O wretched man that I am!* And then makes known his desire of deliverance, and from what he would be delivered, in the words following: *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* That is the general matter of this Verse. I will stand a while to cleere the sense and meaning of the words, *O wretched man that I am!* The word here rendred (*wretched, or miserable*) doth not signifie one in a cursed case and condition, as being out of the favour of God, being here applyed to the *Apostle*; but it signifies one tyred and wearied with continual conflicts and striving with sin, as it were a Champion that hath a long time fought and stood out against his enemies, at length he is wearie and tyred, and like to be overcome of his adversaries, unlesse he be helped; as such an one cryes out sometimes, Oh, how am I tyred, and how am I wearied! so was it with the *Apostle*, in respect of continual buffetings, conflicts, and combates that he sustained, between the remainder of sin that was in him, and the power of grace that was in him; thereupon it was he broke out in this manner, *O wretched man that I am!* as if he had said, How am I tyred, and how am I wearied with continual conflicts and striving with sin, *who shall deliver me?* or who shall rid me, or set me free?

And this the *Apostle* uttered not, as being ignorant who should deliver him or as doubting or despairing of deliverance, but thereby signifies his great desire of it. It is as it were the voyce of one panting, and breathing and desiring to be delivered



delivered. And withal the *Apoſtle* hereby ſignifies the greatneſſe of the combat, out of which he was not able to winde himſelf by his own ſtrength; and therefore he ſaith, *Who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?* or from this body of death.

Theſe words are diverſly expounded. Some expound them thus, *This mortal body ſubject to death.* As if the *Apoſtle* had deſired to be delivered from his conflicts with ſin, by his bodily death. But (as I take it) that is not his purpoſe and meaning: but rather by the word *Body*, we are to underſtand the maſſe and lump of ſin, ſtill in part abiding in the *Apoſtle*, whereof he complained. It is uſual in Scripture, to ſtyle the corruption of nature, even the whole maſſe and lump of ſin, by the name and title of a body, as *Rom. 6. 6.* *That the body of ſin might be deſtroyed;* and in many other places. And it is called a *body of death*, becauſe it is a deadly thing in it ſelf, and makes us liable to death; without Gods mercy, to death temporal, and to death eternal: and therefore it is called a *body of death*.

Thus then conceive the *Apoſtles* meaning in this Verſe, as if he had ſaid.

*O poor tyred and wearied man that I am I find my ſelf in a miſerable caſe, being toyled and turmoyled with continual conflicts, and ſtriving with the reliques of ſin that ſtill abide in me, and I long and greatly deſire deliverance and freedom, and I am not able to winde out my ſelf by mine own ſtrength: and therefore who ſhall deliver me from that maſſe lump of ſin, that ſtill in part abides in me, which is a deadly thing in it ſelf, and of it ſelf makes me liable to death, even death temporal and death eternal?*

Now firſt, in that the *Apoſtle* out of the ſenſe and feeling of ſin in himſelf, rebelling againſt the power of grace that was in him, and ſometimes leading him captive to the law of ſin, breaks out in this manner, and cryes out: O wretched or miſerable man, O poor tyred and wearied that I am, how am I toyled and turmoyled with continual conflicts and combates I we may eaſily gather and take up this concluſion,

That it is a miſerable thing, and mekes men in ſome degree wretched and miſerable, in that they carry about but the remainder of ſin; in that they have ſtill abiding in them but ſome reliques of their natural corruption, and are troubled with the continual assaults and force of that corruption; even the deareſt of Gods children that live on the face of the earth, are in ſome degree wretched, by reaſon of ſin ſtill abiding in them in part, and ſtill rebelling againſt the power of grace that is in them, and by reaſon of the continual conflicts they undergo, between grace and that corruption that ſtill remains in them in part; though the corruption of nature be in part weakned and aboliſhed in Gods children, yet it is a wretched and wearifome thing to them, to carry about them but the remnants of ſin, and to have that ſtirring in them.

This (no doubt) was one cauſe, why the *Apoſtle* deſired to be diſſolved or looſed, and to be with Chriſt, *Philip. 1. 23.* *I deſire to be looſed, and to be with Chriſt.* Though indeed the chief cauſe of his deſire was, that he might be with Chriſt, as himſelf ſpeaks, and enjoy the preſence of Chriſt, and the fulneſſe of joy with him in Heaven, yet (no doubt) one cauſe of his deſire was that he might be freed from his wretchedneſſe and wearifomeſſe, in reſpect of the remainder of ſin that ſtill abode in him: And that the remainder of ſin makes Gods children in ſome degree wretched and miſerable, may eaſily appear to us, if we duly conſider the effects of it in the deareſt of Gods children living in this world: For why? Sin ſtill remaining in Gods children in part, what doth it? Surely it defiles them in part, both within and without, it defiles them in part in all the powers of their ſouls, and in all the parts and members of their bodies; yea, it defiles their moſt holy and beſt actions, it makes a blot and ſtain cleave to the beſt things they perform, and makes all their righteouſneſſe as a menſtruous cloth, *Iſa. 64. 6.* It makes them offend their good and gracious God and Father

#### Doct. 1.

The deareſt of Gods children living in this world, are in ſome degree wretched, by reaſon of ſin ſtill abiding in them in part, and ſtill rebelling againſt the power of grace that is in them.



Father, whom they would not willingly offend, yet it makes them to offend him, by doing things contrary to his will and Word; yea, it makes them many times grieve and makes sad the holy spirit, by whom they are sealed unto the day of Redemption, Ephes. 4. 30. And lastly, it brings down on them many temporal chastisements, and many sore and grievous afflictions, as it did on David, 2 Sam. 12. 10. 11. *The sword shall never depart from thine house*: And in it self, it makes them liable to Gods wrath and everlasting perdition, and deserves eternal punishment, if the Lord were not gracious and merciful to them. And therefore from these effects, as on so many grounds, we may resolve on as a certain and cleere truth, that it is a miserable thing, to carrie about but the reliques of sin, and it makes the best of Gods children in some degree wretched, in that they carrie about but the remainder of sin. And this being a truth;

Use 1.  
Our argument  
against the pa-  
pists, proving  
concupiscence  
to be properly  
sin confirmed.

First, it serves to confirm that argument we use against the Papists, to prove Concupiscence to be truly and properly sin; which they denie. Wee argue thus from this Text: Concupiscence makes men miserable. Therefore it is truly and properly sin; for nothing but sin makes men miserable. But to elude and put off this Argument, the Papists have found out a shift: say they, The word here used, doth not signifie one in disgrace with God, and subject to his heavy displeasure: for that which makes men miserable in that sense, is sin indeed, say they: But the word here signifies an unhappy man, exposed to the danger of sin, and to all the miseries of this world. These be their words, a poor shift, and easily answered: For what is it that makes men unhappy, and exposeth them to the miseries of this world? Is it any thing else but sin? Certainly nothing but sin makes men unhappy, as forgivenesse of sins makes happy, *Blessed is he whose wickednesse is forgiven, and whose sin is covered, Psal. 32. 1.* So sin makes wretched.

Again it is true, that the word here applied to the *Apostle*, doth not signifie one in disgrace with the Lord; but yet taken by it self, it hath that signification, as appears plainly, *Jam. 5. 1. Weep and howle for the miseries that shall come upon you.* What miseries? Surely chiefly miseries in the world to come. And therefore this is but a poor shift of the Papists, to elude our argument. Now for the use of point to our selves.

Use 2.  
The blessed-  
nesse of Gods  
children is  
here mixed  
with some mi-  
serie.

Is it so, that it is a miserable thing, to carrie about but the reliques of sin? And that the best of Gods children are in some degree wretched, in that they carrie about but the remainder of sin? Surely then, Gods children have not a perfection of blessednesse in the time of this life, but their blessednesse here is mixed with some miserie. Though they be in an happy and blessed estate, and truly blessed in this life, having pardon of their sins, assurance of Gods love, the first fruits of the Spirit, and right and title to all the comforts of the Saints of God; yet their blessednesse here is with a mixture of some miserie, in that they carrie about the remainder of sin, and shall carrie it so long as they live in this world; and that defiles their best actions, and makes them offend their good and gracious God: and grieve his Spirit, and draws on them many times the afflicting hand of God; and so their blessednesse here is but in part, and shall not be made perfect in respect of full freedom from sin, till their souls be removed out of their bodies. And this should make Gods children willingly imbrace death, when it comes; death should be welcome to them, because that will set them at liberty, not onely from the miseries of this world, but also from sin, the greatest burden, grief, and vexation to their souls all their life long, after their effectual calling. In this respect therefore; when death comes, they are willingly to yeeld to it, and as it were with both hands to imbrace it.

Use 3

Last of all, is it so, that sin remaining but in part, makes men miserable in some degree? How then doth sin reigning and domineering, make miserable? and in what a miserable case and condition are they, that have in them the whole body of sin, in the full force and strength of it? Surely, their misery must needs be exceeding great and intolerable; take we but a short view of it; they

are



are miſerable within, without, and on every ſide. For why? they are in bondage to Satan, and to the luſts of their own hearts; they are led of the Devil, at his will and pleaſure; they have in them an accuſing and guilty conſcience, and that dogs them and followes them continually; and though it may be for a time benumbed and aſleep, yet at length it will awaken, and ſometimes they feel the flames of Hell ſhaſhing up in their ſouls. The good things done by them, as hearing the Word, Praying, and the like, are not onely defiled with ſin, but they are finnes, and abominable in Gods ſight; they are ſubject to all the Plagues, Judgements, and Curſes of God, denounced againſt ſinne and ſinners in this life, whereof we read *Deut. 28. Yea, the bleſſings of God are curſes to them, Mal. 2, 2.* And when this life ends, then they enter into a Sea and Gulfe of unſpeakable, unconceivable, and endleſſe miſery. For then they ſhall be ſevered from the comfortable preſence of God, and from the glorious fellowſhip of Chriſt, and of his Angels and Saints, and ſhall have eternal fellowſhip with the Devil and his Angels, and feel the whole wrath of God on them: It had been better for them to have been made Toades, then men or women, living and dying in that ſtate and condition: for when the Toad dies, there is an end of the miſery of it; but when they dye, then begins their endleſſe, caſeleſſe, and remedileſſe miſery. And let all ſuch as are yet in their natural ſtate and condition, and as yet lye in their ſins, and as yet live in their ſins, and will not be reformed, conſider theſe things; and if Hell have not taken full poſſeſſion of their ſouls, it will make them bethink themſelves of ſpeedy reformation.

Their miſery is marvellouſ great and intolerable, that have ſin raigning in them.

Conſider we in the next place, that the Apoſtle breaking out, and uttering out, and uttering this exclamation, *O wretched man that I am!* It was (doubtleſſe) out of a true ſenſe and feeling of his wretchedneſſe, in regard of ſin ſtill abiding in him, and rebelling againſt the power of grace that was in him, ſometimes leading him as a captive under the power of it. The Apoſtle, without queſtion, had a lively ſenſe and feeling of his miſery, and held himſelf in ſome degree wretched and miſerable, by reaſon of the remainder of ſin that was in him, continually fighting and warring againſt the power of grace that was in him: and thereupon it was, that he broke out, and cryed out, *O wretched man that I am!*

Hence then we are further given to underſtand thus much,

That Gods children, and ſuch as are truly regenerate, they feel, and they account themſelves wretched and miſerable, in regard of the remainder of ſinne that they find in themſelves, ever rebelling againſt the power of grace that is in them, and they grieve for that miſery of theirs eſpecially, and complain of it, and deſire to be delivered from it. Gods children feel themſelves tyred & wearied & as it were worn out with continual tugging and ſtriving againſt the corruption of their hearts, and nothing more troubles them and grieves them, and nothing do they more complain of, then the reliques of ſinne ſtill abiding in them, and drawing them from their ſound obedience to the will of God, and making them ſometimes to do evil. That which Gods children account their greateſt miſery, is the ſin that ſtill in part abides in them, and their rebellious luſts riſing from that corruption, their unbelief, their dulneſſe and deadneſſe, and the like: Theſe are the things that moſt of all trouble Gods children, which they moſt grieve for, and complain of, and for which eſpecially they feel and hold themſelves wretched and miſerable.

We ſhall find that Gods children have been able to bear their, even the greateſt troubles, with patience, and they have quietly ſuffered reproaches, afflictions, imprisonment, baniſhment, torment & martyrdom, when their bodies have been racked and rent in pieces by moſt cruel tortures, howſoever they were not Stoical and ſenceleſſe in regard of thoſe torments, yet they never thought themſelves wretched & miſerable in reſpect of them; they never broke out on the feeling of them, & ſaid, *O poor wretched men that we are!* No: they have found mat-

*Doct. 2.*

Gods children account ſinne ſtill abiding in them in part, and felt by them rebelling againſt the power of grace that is in them their greateſt miſery.



ter of joy and of rejoycing in them, as the holy Ghost witneſſeth of them, *Heb. 10:34. They ſuffered with joy the ſpoiling of their goods, knowing, that in heaven they had a better and an enduring ſubſtance.* And the Apoſtle ſaith of himſelf, and of other Miniſters of the Goſpel, *2 Cor. 6.4,5,6. That they found matter of rejoycing in neceſſities, in ſtripes, and in priſons, in tumults, and in labours, &c.* And he concludes. *Ver. 10. As ſorrowing, and yet alwayes rejoycing; as poor, and yet making many rich, as having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things.*

Thus have Gods children been affected, in reſpect of the greateſt troubles that have befallen them in this world. But for the trouble of ſin ſtill abiding in them, and felt rebelling againſt the power of grace in them, and ſometimes leading them as captives under the power of it, that they have eſteemed as their miſery of all miſeries, and that they have grieved for, and complained of eſpecially.

VWhen the Apoſtle Paul was troubled with temptations to ſin, which Satan ſuggeſted to his mind, and he felt his own corruption ready to ſtirre him up to pride, through the abundance of Revelations, he eſteemed thoſe things as beatings, and buffetings, and as pricks and thorns in his fleſh, *2 Cor 12. 7. Left I ſhould be exalted out of meaſure, through the abundance of revelations, there was given me a prick in the fleſh, the meſſenger of Satan, to buffet me, becauſe I ſhould not be exalted out of meaſure. Pſal. 119.136. David ſaith. His eyes gushed out with rivers of water, becauſe men kept not the Law of God.* VWas David thus grieved for other mens ſins? Oh then, how was he grieved on the feeling of his own corruption, ſtill in part abiding in him, rebelling againſt the power of grace in him, and ſometimes over-carrying him to the doing of evil? VWith? out queſtion, was a moſt bitter grief and vexation to his ſoul. And if the righteous ſoul of juſt Lot was vexed from day to day, in ſeeing and hearing the unlawful deeds of the Sodomites, as the Apoſtle witneſſeth. *2 Pet. 2:8.* Doubtleſſe his ſoul was much more vexed, when he found that he had been ſo far over-carried as that he had committed Inceſt with his own daughters, *Gen. 19.33. &c. Heb. 11:25.* it is ſaid that *Moses choſe rather to ſuffer adverſity with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon.* He would rather endure any adverſity, then he would yeeld to the corruption of his own heart, to live in ſin; he held and accounted that, of all miſeries the greateſt; and therefore he made choyce rather to endure any hardneſſe with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin. And thus (undoubtedly) it is with all that have the ſame ſpirit and Grace that *Moses* had, even with all Gods children; they eſteeme ſin ſtill abiding in them, and rebelling againſt the power of grace in them, and ſometimes leading them captive under the power of it, their greateſt miſery, and that is the thing they grieve for, and complain of, above all things in the world. And the reaſons of it are theſe:

Reaſons. I.

First, Gods children have their eyes opened, and they ſee and well diſcern, that ſinne ſtill abiding in them, and rebelling againſt the power of grace in them, is the cauſe of all other evils and troubles they undergo and endure; and that, were it not for ſin ſtill remaining in them, they ſhould be free from all other miſeries in the world.

And again, Gods children are able to apprehend ſin ſtill abiding in them, and rebelling againſt the power of grace in them, and to take notice of it, in the true nature of it, and as it is indeed in it ſelf (as namely) that it is vile and odious in Gods ſight, and diſpleaſing to God, and in it ſelf, and of it ſelf, makes them liable to the wrath of God, which no other miſery in the world beſides doth their poverty, their imprisonment, or any other miſery they endure deſerve not the wrath of God in it ſelf, and of it ſelf; nay, they are as highly in Gods favour in their poverty, as in their wealth; in priſon as when they are at liberty. Indeed their carriage in other troubles and miſeries, may deſerve Gods anger and diſpleaſure: but the troubles and miſeries in themſelves, and of themſelves, do not, but ſin that ſtill abides in them, that doth, in it ſelf, and of it ſelf, deſerve the wrath



wrath of God: and this, Gods children have eyes to see, and they are able to apprehend and to take notice of. And hence it is, even on these grounds, that Gods children account sin still abiding in them, and rebelling against the power of grace in them, their greatest misery, and that the spiritual evils they finde in themselves, as their Unbelief, their Dulnesse of minde, their Deadnesse of heart, do most of all trouble them, and those are the things they most grieve for and complain of, and for which especially they feel and hold themselves wretched and miserable.

Now then, this being a truth, it first points out to us a manifest difference that is between Gods children and the men of this world: for why? Gods children hold sin still abiding in them, their greatest misery, and they account their spiritual evils their greatest evils, and those most of all trouble them, and of those they most of all complain: but (alas) it is far otherwise with the men of this world; what do they commonly complain of? and for what do they think themselves wretched and miserable; Surely, for nothing but bodily evils; as because haply they are blinde, or lame, or deaf, or they are imprisoned, or they are extreme poor, or the like: and ye shall sometimes hear a worldly man or woman cry out, and say, Oh! never did any endure such misery, as I have, and do undergo! And why so? Surely, because they be under some grievous sicknesse, or some extreme pain, or they are under extreme poverty, or the like: but never shall you hear a carnal man or woman complain of their wretchednesse and misery, in respect of sin that is in them, and because they are full of spiritual evils; as because they are ignorant of God, and of the wayes of God, because their hearts are hard, and because they are full of vile sinful lusts, and such like. No, no: those things never trouble them, a carnal man or woman never complains of those things.

And that this note of difference may be more profitable, let us every one examine our selves, whether we be affected as Gods children, or no, and whether we have in us that Spirit and that grace that is in Gods children or no. Dost thou finde that when thou art under any bodily evil, thou art blind, or lame, or deaf, or thou art extreme sick, extreme poor, or in prison, or the like? yea, it may be, many bodily evils are on thee at once.

Dost thou finde, that though thou art not senselesse in regard of these evils, but thou hast a feeling of them, yet thou art most apprehensive of thy misery, in regard of sin, and of spiritual evils that are on thee, and thou accountest the sinne that is in thee, thy greatest misery? Dost thou hold the unbelief of thy heart, thy dulnesse in good things, and such like, a greater misery then thy poverty or thy sicknesse, or any other bodily miserie whatsoever? And canst thou desire rather the removal of thy unbelief, and thy dulnesse in good things, then the removal of thy poverty or sicknesse? and, if the Lord were so pleased, that thy spiritual evils might be removed, though thy bodily evils were continued on thee, then that thy bodilie evils should be taken away, and thy spiritual evils continued? is it thus with thee? Certainly, that is a sure evidence that thou hast in thee the affection, the Spirit, and the life and grace of a Childe of God: but on the other side dost thou finde, that when thou art pressed with any bodily evil, thou art blinde, or lame, or deaf, or such like, thou art altogether apprehensive of thy bodily evil, and that sits neer thee, and thou canst bewail that in the bitternesse of thy soul, and cry out in respect of that, O wretched man or woman that I am! and, Never did any endure the like misery that I endure! but as for the sin of thy soul, thy blindnesse of minde, thy hardnesse of heart, and vile lusts of it, those never trouble thee, and of them thou never complaineest, they are no burden to thee, thou art a very poor man or woman, and withal thou art a wicked, vile and sinful man or woman, thou art ignorant and gracelesse, and thy poverty that pincheth thee, and that lies hard on thee, and thou feelest the misery of it, and canst weep for it; but thy vilenesse and sin, that never troubles thee, and thou never bewailest thy self in respect of that. Certainly that

T

shows

Use 1.

How Gods children, and the men of this world, differ in their complaints, touching their miseries.

Use 2.

Trial of our selves, whether we have the affection, the Spirit, and the life and grace of Gods children in us or no.



shews plainly that thou art of the world, and favourest onely the things of the world, and thou art far from the affections of a child of God; yea, know it whosoever thou art; art thou extreme poor and wicked also? and dost thou feel thy poverty, and hast thou no feeling of thy vilenesse and sinne? know it for a truth, that the Lord hath begun to sit in Judgement against thee: and thy poverty, thou still continuing in thy vilenesse and sinne, is but a pledge of more fearful Plagues and Judgements yet to come on thee, and it is but a beginning of sorrowes, *Matth. 24. 8.*

Oh then, let us every one herein examine our selves, and see how we stand affected in respect of the sinne that is in us: and if we would approve our selves to be Gods children, sin and the spiritual evils that be in us, must be esteemed of us as our greatest misery, yea, though we have no bodily evil on us, we are in health, and our outward estate is prosperous, yet then we must be able out of a true feeling of sinne, and the spiritual evils that be in us, striving against grace, and hindring us in good things, to cry out with the Apostle, *O wretched man that I am!* if we would be sure that we have in us the life and grace of Gods children.

*Use 3.*  
Comfort for  
such are ever  
complaining  
of their  
spiritual evils,  
and groaning  
under the bur-  
den of sin.

And so for further use of the point, here is matter of comfort for thee, whosoever thou art, that art ever complaining of thy spiritual evils still cleaving unto thee, and art ever sighing, and groaning under the burden of thine unbelief, thy dulnesse of minde, accounting it thy greatest misery, to be burdened with these sinful infirmities.

Dost thou hold thy self wretched and miserable in respect of thy spiritual evils, and are all other miseries thou endurest, thy poverty, thy sicknesse, and such like, nothing to thee, in comparison of thy misery, because of sin still abiding in thee, and still rebelling against the power of grace that is in thee? And couldst thou be content to undergo any misery in the world, so that thou mightest be freed from thy spiritual evils? Then comfort thy self, thou hast the Spirit, the life and grace of a childe of God, and thou art in the state of grace and of Gods children; think on it to thy comfort.

Note we further; The Apostle here gives instance in himself, *O wretched man that I am!* The Apostle was a man that had a great measure of Grace and Sanctification, yet he held himself wretched and miserable, in regard of sin still abiding in him, and rebelling against the power of grace that was in him, teaching us by his example,

*Doctrine 3.*  
The vanity of  
their opinion  
discovered,  
who dream of  
perfection of  
grace in de-  
gree in time of  
this life.

That the best of Gods Children ought to be far from that fond conceit, that they are come to perfection of grace in degree, and have fulnesse of joy, and comfort, and need not any more to weep for their sinnes. That is a fond and foolish opinion of some, who think they have howled and wept for their sinnes, and they have been sufficiently humbled for them, and they need not to weep any more. That is to indent with God, how far they will proceed in humiliation.

Though we have joy in believing, and in the apprehension of Gods love and favour towards us in Christ, and that our sins are forgiven, and that we have right and title to all the comforts of the Saints of God both in this life, and in the life to come, and in this respect our hearts do rejoyce with joy unspeakable and glorious; yet in regard of sin still abiding in us, and rebelling against the power of grace in us, the best of us all have cause to cry out, *O wretched man, or woman that I am!* who shall deliver me from the bodie of this death!

Come we now to the words following: *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* These words, *Who shall deliver me?* as I shewed, are not to be taken as if the Apostle had been ignorant who should deliver him, or as uttered by way of doubting or despairing of deliverance; but they are uttered by the Apostle, as it were panting, and breathing, and earnestly desiring deliverance. The Apostle was already in part freed from the power of his own corruption, being



being a man truly regenerate and truly sanctified, yet feeling the remainder of sin that was in him, still rebelling against the power of grace in him, and finding himself in that respect wretched and miserable, he desires further deliverance, and more and more to be delivered, yea, doubtlesse, he earnestly desired a full and perfect deliverance. And as it was with the *Apostle*, so is it with all Gods Children. And the point hence is this,

That Gods Children and such as are truly regenerate, they sigh and groane under the burden of sin still abiding in them in part, and still clogging and troubling them, and they desire deliverance from it, yea, they earnestly pant, and breathe after a full and perfect deliverance from the corruption of nature, and from the spiritual evils they find in themselves: they would willingly shake them off, and be rid of them altogether. Gods Children constantly and continually desire deliverance from sin, and from sinful infirmities, still sticking in them, and cleaving to them, and they would think it their happinesse in part, to be altogether freed from them. And for this we have not onely evidence in this Text, but in other places of Scripture: read *Psal. 51. 12.* David there prayes thus to the Lord, *Stablish me with thy free Spirit.* What is that? Why surely, with that Spirit of thine that is every day more and more to set me at liberty from under the power of Satan, and from under the power of mine own corruption: as if he had said, O, vouchsafe to me that good Spirit of thine, and such a measure of thy grace, as I may more and more be freed from the bondage of mine own corruption. So again, *Psal. 143. 10.* he prayes to the Lord on this manner, *Let thy good Spirit lead me into the Land of righteousness.* As if he had said, Let not the corruption of mine own heart hinder me in the way of holinesse and righteousness, but more and more free me from it by thy grace, and let thy good Spirit so guide me, as I may know what is good, and just, and righteous, and be able also to practise it. And *Psal. 119. 32.* he desires enlargement of his heart, a setting of his heart at liberty, no doubt, from the bondage of corruption, with a promise to runne the way of Gods Commandements, *I will runne the way of thy Commandements, when thou shalt enlarge mine heart.* 1 *John 3. 3.* saith Saint John, *Every one that hath this hope in him, purgeth himself:* every one that hath hope of glory when Christ shall appear to Judgement, purgeth himself, that is, he desires and he endeavours more and more to purge out the corruption of his heart, it is the earnest desire of his heart more and more to have it cleansed out, and to be freed from it, it is the exhortation of the Holy Ghost, *Heb. 12. Verse 1.* to the believing Hebrews, and in them to all Believers, that they should cast away, and throw off the sinne that hangeth so fast on, or easily compasseth about: meaning the corruption of their hearts, that they should altogether disburden themselves of it. And *Matth. 6. 13.* Christ hath taught all that are able truly to call God Father, thus to pray, *Deliver us from evil,* that is, not onely from the Devil, but also from the power of their own corruption, and from all evils in the World.

Now that which Christ teacheth to pray for, and that which the Lord calls for at the hands of his Children, doubtlesse, they desire to do, as David saith, *Psal. 40. 8.* *I desired to do thy good Will, O my God; yea, thy Law is within mine heart.* And therefore this conclusion hath ground in Scripture, That Gods Children sigh and groane under the burden of sinne still abiding in them, and they desire deliverance from it, yea, they breathe after a full and perfect deliverance from the corruption of their nature, and from the spiritual evils they find in themselves, and they would willingly be altogether rid of them: it is the constant and continual desire of their hearts; and the reasons of it are these,

First, Gods Children find, that by reason of the corruption of nature still abiding in them, they are prone to yield to temptations, to sin suggested by Satan, and that if the Lord hold back his grace never so little, it makes them

*Doct. 4.*

Gods children sigh and groane under the burden of sin still abiding in them, and they earnestly desire a full deliverance from it, as part of their happinesse.

*Reasons. 1.*



them yield not onely consent of will, but to the doing of evil, which is a cut, a wound and a grief to their souls.

Again, Gods Children find much sweetnesse in their liberty and freedom from the corruption of nature in part, in that they are in part freed from it, and they are able in part with freedom of Spirit to serve the Lord, and they would not for all the world be again in their former bondage.

On these grounds then we may set this down for a truth, that Gods Children pant and breathe after deliverance from the corruption of their nature, even after a full and perfect deliverance from it, and from their spiritual evils, and it is the constant and continual desire of their hearts, to be altogether freed from them.

*Use 1.*  
Difference between Gods Children, and such as are yet in their natural state, touching their desire of freedom from the corruption of hearts, discovered.

*Note.*

*Use 2.*  
A speciall note of tryal, whether we be the Children of God or no.

An holy and comfortable discontentment.

Now then first, this again discovers to us a manifest difference, that is between Gods Children and such as are yet in their natural state and condition: for why? Thus it is with Gods Children, they pant and breathe after a full and perfect deliverance from the corruption of their hearts, and from their spiritual evils, but it is far otherwise with them that are yet in their filth and dregs of nature. Alas, they desire nothing lesse then deliverance from the sin that is in them, and from the vile lusts of their own hearts. No, no; they hold it their happinesse to live in sin, and to yeeld to the lusts of their hearts, and they account it even their chief felicity, when they may follow the swinge of their own corrupt hearts, and nothing grieves them more, then when they are crossed in their sensual delights and pleasures. We find it so in woful experience. How many have we, that are given over to the vile lusts of their own hearts? And they cannot abide such as will not pour forth themselves to the same excesse of Ryot, and they hate none more then such as go about to reform them, yea, such as are yet in their natural state and condition, and also in the state of reprobation, their desire to sin is infinite, *"they have in them a Will to sin for ever, if they might live for ever in this World, even when they are in Hell, their desire is to sin as they were on the earth; and therefore their punishment is eternal: that is one reason of the eternity of it."*

And let us every one try our selves by the ground of Doctrine now delivered. Doeſt thou hold thy self a child of God? Every one no doubt is ready to assume that to himself. Doeſt thou I say, whosoever thou art, hold thy self a child of God? Then try thy self by this particular note: and if thou wouldst indeed approve thy self to be, thou must find thy self not only in part freed from the power of thine own corruption, but that thou also findest sweetnesse in that freedom, and doeſt pant and breathe after a further deliverance, even after a full deliverance from it, and that thou dost wish and desire that above all things in the world.

This must be in thee, if thou wouldst make it good to the comfort of thine own soul, that thou art a child of God: and though we cannot come to be altogether freed from the corruption of nature, and though we cannot wholly shake off all sinful infirmities whileſt we live here in this world yet if we hold our selves Gods children, we are to look to this, that it be the desire of our hearts, to be altogether freed from them, and that we desire it constantly and continually, and that our desire be not a light vanishing motion, but that we second our desire with a careful use of all good means, diligent hearing, and reading in the Word of God, prayer, and the like; yea, let us be restless and discontent in this respect: that is an holy discontentment, when we find our selves clogged with unbelief, with doubting, with distrust, and the like, and we would faine shake them off, and we cannot, then to be in a sort discontent, and even restless in our desire to be rid of them, and in our care to use the means to that purpose, that is an holy discontentment. And know it, whosoever thou art, that art thus restless, and thus discontented, know it, I say to thy comfort, that though thou canst not be altogether freed from that spiritual evil that lyes heavy on thy soul, and thou desirest to shake off, and useſt all good means



means to that purpose, yet that evil shall never be imputed to thee; though the Lord be pleased to keep thee in exercise under it, yet he will never charge it on thy soul, but will accept thy will and desire to be freed from it, as if thou wert indeed freed from it. Think on that to thy comfort.

Note we further, the *Apoſtle* ſaith not, How ſhall I deliver my ſelf? how ſhall I ſet my ſelf free from the body of this death? But, *Who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?* As if he had ſaid, I am not able by mine own ſtrength and power to deliver my ſelf: and therefore who ſhall deliver me? He goes out of himſelf, to ſeek deliverance from the remainder of ſin that was in him.

And thus it ought to be with all Gods children; though they be in part freed from the power of their own corruption, yet they are not able of themſelves, by any power in themſelves, further to free themſelves; no, they muſt ſtill pray, as Chriſt hath taught, *Lord, deliver us from evil*; that is, from the evil of ſin ſtill abiding in us. It is Chriſt that muſt further deliver them, as the *Apoſtle* ſubjoynes: *I thank God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

This I note, to ſhew that firſt the Papists are deceived, who hold, that a man regenerate hath ſuch power in himſelf, as he is able to keep himſelf free from mortal ſin, as they call it, yea, perfectly to fulfil the Law God. That is a groſſe error. And again, to ſhew that they pleaſe themſelves with a fond and windy conceit, whoſoever they be that think they may, at their own time and pleaſure, deliver themſelves from under the bondage of their own luſts, they are in thraldome to the luſts of thir own hearts, and they think they can at their own time and pleaſures deliver themſelves: they that ſo think, are blinded by the Devil, and are the Devils fools; he hood-winks them, and makes them neglect the timely uſing of means, by which God worketh the calling and conversion of his Chosen, and deliverance from under the power of ſin and Satan, namely, diligent hearing, reading, & meditating in the word of God, & the like.

Come we now to the laſt words of this Verſe, wherein the *Apoſtle* expreſſeth from what he would be delivered, namely, from the body of this death, *Who ſhall deliver me*, (ſaith he) *from the body of this death?* that is, as we ſhewed, from the maſſy lump of ſin ſtill abiding in me, which is deadly, and in it ſelf deſerveth death of body, and death of ſoul.

Now here in the firſt place obſerve we, that the *Apoſtle* deſireth to be delivered and freed from the maſſy lump of ſin he ſtill felt in himſelf, which he calls by the name of a body: he ſaith, *who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?* He ſaith not, Who ſhall deliver me from ſome limme or member of that corruption I ſtill find in my ſelf? But *from the body of it*. He deſires to be delivered from the body of corruption that he ſtill found in himſelf, even from ſin and corruption, extending it ſelf ſtill in part over all the powers of his ſoul. Thus it was with the *Apoſtle*, and thus indeed it ought to be with all that would be like the *Apoſtle*, even with all and every one that would find their hearts taken up with a true deſire of deliverance, and freedom from the corruption of their own nature. And the point hence is this,

If we deſire to be freed from the corruption of our own nature truly, and as we ought to do, and ſo as our deſire may yeeld true comfort to us, then it is our deſire, and we endeavour, and we labour and ſtrive to be freed from the body of ſin, from the maſſy lump of corruption in all the powers of our ſouls, and in all the parts and members of our bodies: our deſire is to have corruption and ſinne removed and taken away, not from our minds alone, or from our wills alone, but from all and every power and faculty of our ſouls, and from all and every part and member of our bodies. That the whole maſſe and body of ſin over-ſpreading all the powers of the one, and parts of the other may be removed, that is our deſire, if we have in us a true deſire: for indeed that is ſuch a deſire, as is ſutable & agreeable to that which the holy ghoſt requires of us, ſaith the *Apoſtle*; *If any man be in Chriſt Jeſus let him be a new creature.*

*Doct. 5.*

Gods children cannot free themſelves from corruption, ſtill abiding in them, by any power in themſelves.

*Uſe 1.*

Confutation of the papists.

*Uſe 2.*

Another vain conceit diſcovered.

*Doct. 6.*

A true and comfortable deſire of freedom from ſin, is a deſire to be free from ſin in all the powers of the ſoul, and in all the parts & members of the body.

1 Cor. 5. 17

And



And Ephes. 4. 22. he saith again; *Cast off the old man, which is corrupt through the deceiverable lusts*; And the like exhortations we have in many other places of Scripture. And the holy Ghost requiring this of us, even a new creation, and a casting off the old man, as it were a perfect man, with all the parts and members of a perfect man; surely, our desire is answerable to it, if it be a true desire. And so, if we desire freedom from our own corruption truly, and as we ought, and so as we may find comfort in our desire, then we desire, as the holy Ghost requires of us, freedom from the body of sinne, from the massie lump of sinne in all the powers of our souls, and in all the parts and members of our bodies. And the reason and ground of it is this,

#### Reason.

True Regeneration or Sanctification is entire, it is of the whole man, it is found in all the powers of the soul, and in all the parts and members of the body, sinne and corruption is removed in part from all the powers of the one, and from all the parts and members of the other, and grace is wrought in part throughout in them that are truly sanctified, according to that of the *Apostle*, 1 *Thess.* 5. 23. *The very God of peace sanctifie you throughout*. And therefore it must needs be, that as many as desire to be freed from the corruption of their own hearts truly, and as they ought to desire, and so as they may find comfort in their desire, they desire, and they endeavour, and they labour and strive, to be freed from the body of sinne, from sinne throughout in all the powers of their souls, and in all the parts and members of their bodies.

#### Use.

Who they be that deceive themselves, in their desire of freedom from sin.

Let no man then, for use of this, deceive himself, and think that he hath a true desire to be freed from the corruption of his nature, because haply he desires to have the blindness of his mind removed, and error taken away from his judgment, and yet hath no desire to be freed from the sinful lust of his heart. Many there be that have a great desire after knowledge, and that their ignorance may be dispelled and removed, their desire in that respect is insatiable; which I discommend not; but in the mean time their hearts are full of Pride, Envy, Self-love, Self-conceit, Covetousnesse, and the like, and they have no desire at all to have their hearts cleansed and freed from those vile lusts. Now such persons; if they think they desire freedom, from sin truly and to their comfort, they deceive themselves, they are far from that desire that was in the *Apostle*, and from that desire that is found in Gods Children. Gods children doubtlesse, feel the waight of sin pressing and lying heavy, not onely on their minds, but on their hearts also, and they desire to be disburdened, as from ignorance, and blindness of mind, and error of judgment: so from pride, Self-love, Covetousnesse, and other inordinate lusts and evil affections, and indeed from the whole body of sin, from sin in all the powers of their souls, and in all the parts and members of their bodies.

And this must be thy desire; if thou wouldst find comfort in thy desire, thou must desire, and labour, and strive for the removal of sinne from thy minde, will, affections, memory, conscience, appetite, senses; and that Grace may be wrought in thee throughout, that is an holy and a sanctified desire, the desire of a Child of God, and that will seal up to thee this comfort, that thou hast in thee the Spirit of grace and sanctification: and therefore never rest, til thou finde that it is the desire of thy heart, to be delivered from the body of sin.

Now in that the *Apostle* here calls the corruption of nature still abiding in him in part, by the name of a *body*, we are given to understand thus much: I will but touch it briefly; we have heretofore handled the point.

#### Dott. 7.

The corruption of nature is, as it were, a massie and substantial body.

That the corruption of nature is no light superficial thing, no shaddow; but it is as it were a massie and substantial body, though indeed it is no substance, as some have thought: for then could not the soul be immortal. But it is as a body, and it hath as it were all the dimensions and all the parts of a soul, monstrous, and deformed body, in which are found all finnes bound up, as it were, in one body, which break out as any occasion is offered. And hence it is, that the

*Apostle*



*Apostle calls divers foul finnes breaking out of this body, members, Coloss. 3.5. Mortifie your members which are on the earth, fornication, uncleanness, the inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousnesse, which is Idolatry. Yea, the corruption of nature contains in it all sins; it is as a Root, or an Ocean Sea, sending out streams and floods of sin; so that, as one saith well, If all heresies and sins were ceased in the world, yet if the Lord leave a man to himself, he hath in him sufficient matter and spawn to breed all kind of errour and sinne, Gal. 5. 19.*

The *Apostle* having reckoned up many works of the flesh, he is forced to conclude, *Verf. 21.* and such like, as not able to reckon up all, "*And indeed, if a man from his infancy were severed from the company of men, and did live in the wilderness, where he could neither see, nor hear any evil, yet so great is the corruption of his own nature, that his own heart would teach him to do wickedly.*" I am not able to expresse the greatnesse of the corruption of mans degenerate nature. No surely, if an Angel should come from heaven, he were not able to expresse it: and therefore for the use of this,

Let no man think it a small matter, a light and trifling thing, to be in his natural condition. Some there be that please themselves, and think themselves in very good case, onely because they are free from some grosse actual sins; they are no Drunkards, no Whoremongers, or the like. Poor soules! they deceive themselves: this they may be by restraining grace, and yet lie wallowing in the puddle of their own filthinesse. And know it, whosoever thou art, it is not only thy actual transgression of Gods Law, that makes thee lyable to Gods wrath, but it is also thy natural corruption, yea, that chiefly, that being the mother-sin, and the root of all other sins, that doth stand up between thee and Gods favour, and make thee lyable to Gods curse and everlasting perdition. And therefore labour thou to see the greatnesse of thy natural corruption, and to see thy self under the wrath of God in regard of that, and seeing it, bewail and lament for that above all things in the world, yea, when thou humblest thy self for any known actual sin, then look thou bewail the corruption of thine own heart, as the root and mother of that and all other thy sins. For haply thou mayst acknowledg some known actual sin, out of self-love, or for fear of shame, or punishment, or the like: and unlesse by that sin thou be brought to have a sense and sorrow for the mother of that and all other thy sins, thou shalt never find ease and refreshing from Christ. *He came not to call the righteous, Matth. 9. 13. but sinners to repentance:* and not every sinner, but that sinner that condemns sin in himself, and especially the mother sin, and is weary, and laden, and groanes under the burden of it, *Matth. 11. 28.*

Now further, the *Apostle* addes, *the body of this death, or, this body of death,* that is, which is deadly in it self, and of it self deserves death, and makes me lyable to death temporal, and death eternal.

We see then, that the best of Gods children, even such as the *Apostle* was, though they have but the remainder of sin in them, yet they have that in them, that of it self, and in it self deserves death of body, and death of soul; they have in them a body of death, even that which in it self, and of it self, makes them lyable to death temporal, and death eternal; for why? they have still abiding in them in part, that which is contrary to the perfect purity and holinesse that is required in the Law of God, and is in it self truly and properly sin, and the wages of sin is death, *Rom. 6. 23.* And the soul that sinneth, and is guilty of sinne, shall dye, *Ezek. 18. 4.* according to that threatening, *Gen. 2. 17. In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt dye the death.*

*Objection. Jam. 1. 15. the Apostle saith, When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.* Therefore natural corruption, of it self, and in it self, makes not lyable to death.

I answer, The purpose of the *Apostle* in that place, is not to put a difference between natural corruption, and actual sin, in regard of the desert; as if actual sin

*Note.*

*Use.*

It is no small matter for a man to be in his natural state and condition.

*Doctrine 8.*  
The best of Gods children have that in them, that in it self, and of it self, makes them lyable to death temporal, and death eternal.

*Object.*

*Ans.*



sin deserved death, and made men lyable to death, and that concupiscence or natural corruption did not so: but to shew that *God tempteth no man to sin*, as it is *Vers. 13.* *but that he is tempted, enticed, and drawn to sin by his own concupiscence.* And he puts down the fruits of concupiscence or natural corruption, that it enticeth and draweth to sin, and that it brings forth sin and death: and therefore still it remains a truth, that the best of Gods children having but the remainder of sin in them, they have that in them, which in it self, and of it self, makes them lyable to death temporal, and death eternal. And therefore for the use of this,

Use.

The best of Gods children have that in them that deserves hell, and they that have sin in them in the full force of it, have that in them that deserves the hottest fire of hell.

Gods Children, even the best of them, are to acknowledge it Gods mercy, that they are not thrown to hell; they have that in them, that deserves hell. And if the best of Gods Children have that in them that deserves hell, what then have they that have the body of sin, in the full force and strength of it breaking out with many foul actual sins? Surely, they have that in them, that deserves the hottest fire of hell; and they are but under Gods patience and long-sufferance; and that they are suffered to live many yeers on the face of the earth, it is but the patience of God towards them, they are every moment subject to the strokes of Gods hand, to plagues and Judgments in this world, and to everlasting perdition in the world to come; and it is a foolish plea that some use, when they are told of their sins, and that by the least of their sins, they deserve hell and damnation.

Oh, say they, I hope there is no such matter. Will the Lord damne my soul for a little Swearing, for a little Idle and Foolish talking, and for a little Merriment? No, no; I hope there is more mercy with the Lord then so: I pray God I never do worse, and then I hope I shall do well enough. Poor soule! Thou speakest ignorantly and foolishly. Dost thou not ill enough to provoke the Lord to anger, and to damn thee body and soul? This thou dost by the least of thy sins; and though God be merciful, yet he is just also, and it stands with his Justice, to damn thy soul for the least of thy sins, thou living and dying in it without repentance. And therefore think not that the Lord should deal hardly with thee, if he should damn thy soul and body for thy Swearing, thy Idle and Foolish speaking, unlesse thou repent of those sins: for the least of those sins deserves death and damnation, and it is Gods mercy in Christ, that the best of Gods Children are not thrown to hell, for the remainder of sin that is in them, though they had no other sins at all.

#### VERS. 25.

*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord: then I my self in my mind serve the Law of God, but in my flesh the Law of sin.*



Our Apostle having uttered his complaint, in regard of sinne still abiding in him, and rebelling against the power of grace in him, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!* and made known his desire to be delivered, and from what he would be delivered; here in the first words of this Verse, he subjoyns matter of comfort and consolation in and through Christ, for which he gives thanks to God, and he saith, *I thank God through Jesus Christ:* whom he further styles by his Title, (*Lord*) appropriating that title to himself and other true Believers, *through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Now not to meddle with the words following, but to keep within the compass of these words, containing matter of comfort, whereby the Apostle did cheer up himself, I will briefly lay forth the sense and meaning of them.

Interpretation

*I thank God.* Some would have these words read thus: *The grace of God through Jesus Christ.* But indeed they are mistaken: In the Original word, it



it is the ſame that we have, Rom. 1. 8. *εὐχαριστῶ τοῦ θεοῦ μου* : *I thank my God.* And is rightly rendred, *I thank God*; (that is) *I bleſſe God, I praife God, or I give him thanks. Through Jeſus Chriſt.* Theſe words have reſpect, and look back to that the Apoſtle ſaid verſe before, *Who ſhall deliver me?* Which being uttered by him (as I told you) as it were panting and breathing after deliverance; Here he ſubjoyns matter of comfort in and through *Jeſus Chriſt*, that in him he ſhould be delivered: for ſo the ſentence is to be ſupplied, to make up the full ſence and meaning. As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, *Through Jeſus Chriſt, I ſhall be delivered, I certainly expect and look for a full and perfect deliverance from the power of ſin ſtill abiding in me, and from the guilt of ſin*: for both theſe are here to be underſtood, as may eaſily appear by the connexion of this Text, with that which followeth, Chap. 8. *Now then, there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus.*

And ſo theſe words, *through Jeſus Chriſt*, they carry this ſence; I am perſwaded, I reſt on it, that through *Jeſus Chriſt*, I ſhall have a full deliverance from the power of ſin, and from the guilt of ſinne, for which I bleſſe God, I thank God, through *Jeſus Chriſt*.

The Apoſtle addes *our Lord*; (that is) *our Lord*, not onely as he is Lord over all creatures by right of creation, but in more ſpecial manner, and that in a double reſpect: Firſt, in reſpect of free donation from his Father, *Joh. 17. 9.* Secondly, in reſpect of his work of Redemption, *1 Cor. 6. 19 20. Ye are not your own: for ye are bought for a price.* Chriſt hath redeemed you with his own blood, and therefore you are his, he is Lord over you.

Thus then conceive we theſe words; *I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* As if the Apoſtle had ſaid, *I bleſſe God, I praife God, and I give God thanks, that in and through Jeſus Chriſt I certainly expect and look for deliverance, yea, I am fully perſwaded, and I reſt on it, that in and through him I ſhall have a full and perfect deliverance from the power of ſin ſtill abiding in me, and from the guilt of ſin, even in and through him who is my Lord and yours, and the Lord of all true Believers, both by donation and free gift from his Father, and by right of Redemption.*

Firſt, here we ſee, we may eaſily obſerve it, that the Apoſtle breaking out into a complaint of his wretchedneſſe in regard of ſin ſtill abiding in him in part, and deſiring deliverance from the power of ſin, and from the guilt of ſin, even panting and breathing after it, he found no comfort in himſelf, or in any thing that was in himſelf, or in any other, but only in *Jeſus Chriſt*.

He found nothing that was able to free him from the power of ſin, and that might pacifie his conſcience, in reſpect of the guilt of ſin, either in himſelf, or elſewhere in the world, but only in *Jeſus Chriſt*: and having before cryed out, *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!* Here he gathers comfort to himſelf, and cheers up his ſoul, that in *Jeſus Chriſt* deliverance was to be found; and he ſaith, *I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt, I ſhall be delivered.* The point hence is this;

That the ſoul of man or woman being troubled in reſpect of ſin, feeling the weight and burden of it preſſing and lying heavy on it, yea, the ſoul of man or woman feeling but the remainder of ſin, and ſinful infirmities, that ſtill ſtick and cleave to it, (for that was the Apoſtles caſe) I ſay, feeling but the remainder of ſin preſſing, and lying heavy on it, and being weary and laden with the burden of it, it finds no eaſe, no comfort, no reſreſhing in it ſelf, or in any thing elſewhere in the world, but only in *Jeſus Chriſt*, the mind and conſcience weary, and laden, and groaning under the burden of ſin, cannot poſſibly be eaſed or comforted, and reſreſhed, till it come to reſt on Chriſt, in him alone is eaſe, comfort and reſreſhing to be found to the weary ſoul, and to the poor diſtreſſed mind and conſcience. And hence it is that Chriſt is called, *The Prince of Peace*, *Iſai 9. 6. Unto us a Child is born, and unto us a Son is given, and he ſhall call his name, Wonderful, Counſellour, The mighty God, The everlaſting Father, The Prince of Peace,*

*Doctr. 1.*  
The mind and conſcience weary, and laden, and groaning under the burden of ſin, finds no eaſe, comfort or reſreſhing, till it come to reſt on Chriſt.

And



And he is called our peace, *Ephes. 2. 14. He is our peace, who hath made of both one, and hath broken the stop of the partition Wall. Rom. 5. 1. The Apostle saith, that being justified by faith, we have peace toward God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And hence, doubtlesse, it was, that the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 2. 2. He esteemed to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified; and Philip. 3. 8, 9. The Apostle saith, He counted all things losse, and judged them to be dung, in respect of this, that he might win Christ, and be found in him. And Christ himself calls all that are weary, and laden, and groan under the burden of their sins, to come to him, with a promise that in him they shall find ease, comfort, and refreshing, Mat. 11. 28. Come unto me, all ye that are weary and laden, and I will ease you.*

These and many other testimonies of Scripture do make this manifest, that in Christ alone, the poor weary soul, and the distressed mind and conscience finds ease, and comfort, and refreshing, in respect of freedom from the guilt of sin: and the reason of it is this;

*Reason.*

In Christ alone is found that which is able to answer the Justice of God, and to appease his anger for sin, even fulnesse of merit is found in his blood alone, for the taking away both of the guilt and punishment due to sin: he being God and man in one person, his death and suffering is of infinite merit for the taking away of sin; and therefore it must needs be, that in Christ alone is ease, comfort, and refreshing to be found to the weary soul, and to the poor distressed mind and conscience, and the soul of man or woman troubled for sin, and tyred out, feeling the weight and burden of sin pressing and lying heavy on it, can find no ease, comfort or refreshing in it self, or in any thing else-where in the world, touching freedom from guiltinesse of sin, but only in Jesus Christ: and this being a truth,

*Use 1.*

That error of the Papists confuted, that peace of conscience towards God, may be had by inherent holinesse, and by the merit of good works.

For use, it meets with a Popish error; it is held and taught by the Papists, that peace and quietnesse of conscience, even towards God, may be had by inherent holinesse, and by the merit of good works, that a man may have his conscience quieted and pacified in respect of Justification, and freedom from guiltinesse of sin, by his own inherent holiness, and by the merit of his own good works. That is a grosse error, and it cannot stand with the Truth now delivered. *Luther* reports, that he in his time observed many Papists, that took great pains, and on meer conscience did as much as was possible for them, in Fasting, Prayer, and other exercises; and all to this end, that they might find quietnesse, and peace of conscience: and yet the more they laboured, the more they were stricken down with fear, and especially when they came to the hour of death; then (saith he) I have seen them exceeding fearful, yea, I have seen sometimes Murtherers and others, executed as notorious Malefactors, dye more comfortably, then they did.

This *Luther* observed in his time. And no marvel though it were so: for it is not possible, that the conscience should be pacified touching freedom from guiltinesse of sin, by any good thing found in us, or done by us for the merit of it; no, I dare be bold to say, that Christ his fulfilling of the Law of God cannot pacifie the conscience, in respect of the guiltinesse of sin: for then Christ dyed in vain, and therefore it is a grosse error to say, that peace of conscience towards God may be had by inherent holinesse, and by the merit of good Works.

Again, for a second Use: Is it so, that in Christ alone is found ease, comfort, and refreshing to the weary soul, and to the poor distressed mind and conscience? Cannot the soul that is wearied with the burden of sin, be eased and comforted, till it come to rest on Jesus Christ?

*Use 2.*

Where Gods Children feeling their sinful infirmities lying heavy on their soules, are to seek for ease, comfort, and refreshing.

Then learn we, when sin lyeth heavy on our soules, and we feel the weight and the burden of it, yea, we being Gods Children, and feeling sinful infirmities lying heavy on our soules which we are weary of, and would willingly shake off, and cannot; learn we, I say, where we are to seek and to look for ease, comfort and refreshing. Surely not in our selves, nor in any thing in our selves, nor elsewhere in the World, but only in Jesus Christ the Store-house of all true comfort.

Some



Some there be that much complain of their sinful infirmities, and it is a good complaint; I doubt not but they are the dear children of God that so complain, and they say sometimes, Oh, if I might come to such a measure of faith, or such a measure of trust in God, or such a measure of joy and delight in good things, and such like, I should be well, my mind would then be at ease and quiet.

Indeed, I grant, if thou hadst that measure of faith, of trust in God, and delight in good things thou desirest, it would yeeld thee much comfort, because it would strongly seal up to thee thy being in Christ: yet thou must know, that still thy comfort comes from Christ, "it is not the measure of thy faith; nor" the measure of any other grace that is in thee, because it is so great or so strong, and because of the excellencie, goodnesse and dignity of it, that yeelds thee comfort, but because faith hath an eye to Christ, and from him drawes down comfort, and because other graces do evidence to thee thy being in Christ; and so from Christ alone, still comes all thy comfort and peace to thy soul. And therefore rest not in any grace or goodnesse in thy self, as the ground of thy comfort, though it may yeeld thee much comfort, in that it gives thee assurance that thou art in Christ; yet still for the ground of thy comfort, go out of thy self, and seek for that in Christ alone: in him alone shalt thou find ease, comfort, rest, and refreshing to thy wearie soul.

*Note.*

Note we further, the *Apostle* having cryed out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Here he cheeres up himself with this, that certainly in Christ he should have a full deliverance from the power of sin.

Thus may Gods children comfort and cheere up themselves: That howsoever they now are troubled with many sinful infirmities, that presse them and lye heavy on them, yet one day in and through Christ they shall be fully and altogether freed from them: *The Lord hath begun his good work of grace in them, and he will perfect it. Phil. 1. 6. and they shall one day know as they are known, 1 Cor. 13. 12.* And therefore comfort thy self whosoever thou art, that feelest the want of holinesse and sanctification, and art ever complaining of that want: here is ground of comfort for thee. Hast thou the first fruits of the Spirit? an hatred of all sins, a constant purpose to please God, and a true fear of God, and hereby evidence that thou art in Christ? Then comfort thy self: he will not only free thee from the guiltinesse of sin, and from the punishment due unto thee for sin, but he will one day also free thee altogether from the power of sin, and thou shalt one day be fully and perfectly sanctified, and be invested with the perfect and glorious Image of Jesus Christ.

How Gods Children may comfort and cheere up themselves, though they be troubled with many sinful infirmities.

In the next place observe we, that the *Apostle* here speaking of his deliverance from the power of sin, and from the guiltinesse of sin through Jesus Christ, he doth not barely affirm it, and speak of it, but he affirms it, and speaks of it with thanksgiving to God, he saith not barely, Through Jesus Christ I shall be delivered: but *I thank God, I blesse God, and I give him thanks through Jesus Christ, I shall have deliverance.* He remembers this great benefit of deliverance from the power of sin, and from the guiltinesse of sin through Christ, and speaks of it with hearty thanks to God for it.

*Doct. 2.*

\* We must blesse God, and give him praise for good things past, present, or to come, especially for the good things of the life to come, whensoever we either think or speak of them;

Now, that which the *Apostle* did, that must we do, even as many as would approve themselves to be such as the *Apostle* was, that is, truly regenerate, and Gods Children: his example must be our pattern, and the duty hence is this;

\* That we must never mention and speak of Gods benefits and mercies vouchsafed unto us, and especially Heavenly and Spiritual benefits, as freedom from sin, Hell, death, and damnation, the favour of God, comfort in Christ or the like, but we are to have our mouthes opened in magnifying and praying God for the same; Whensoever we either think or speak of Gods blessings, benefits and mercies vouchsafed unto us, yea, the blessings and good things we

hope



hope for, and expect, and look for at the hands of the Lord, and especially heavenly and spiritual good things, such as concern life and salvation, and the everlasting good of our souls, we are not barely to think or speak of them, but so to think, and so to speak of them, as that we give the Lord his due praise and glory, and in thinking and speaking of them, our hearts must be enlarged, and our mouths opened, in giving praise and thanks to the Lord for the same; we must bless God, and give him praise for good things past, present or to come especially for the good things of the life to come, whensoever we either think or speak of them.

Thus did the holy *Apostle*: we find it in the beginning of most of his Epistles, that he brake out into praise and thanks to God, for spiritual good things bestowed on himself, and on the Church and Saints of God to whom he writ, as *Rom. 1.8. I thank my God, through Jesus Christ; for you all. because your faith is published through out the whole world. 1 Cor. 1.4. I thank my God alwayes on your behalfs, for the grace of God which is given you in Jesus Christ, Ephes. 1.3. Blessed be God. even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ.* And so in other of his Epistles. And thus did the *Apostle Peter, 1 Pet. 1.3.* saith he, *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

And the holy man of God *David*, though he made pretious account and reckoning of prayer, and used it much and often, yet Praise and Thanksgiving to God he held and accounted most excellent, and that he used seven times a day (that is often) a certain number being put for an uncertain. *Psal. 119. 164. Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments:* and he composed and made many *Psalmes* purposely of Praise and Thanksgiving to God, *Psal. 103. 1, 2.* he stirres up himself, and calls on his own soul, and all that was within him, to praise the holy name of the Lord, for his mercies and benefits in pardoning his sins, in redeeming his life from the grave, and crowning him with mercy and compassion.

This hath been the practice of the holy Servants of God in all Ages, to praise the Lord for his mercies and benefits bestowed on them, and especially for spiritual and heavenly blessings: and this ought to be our practice, if we would approve our selves to be guided by the same Spirit that they were: whensoever we either think or speak of good things past or present bestowed upon us, or the good things we hope for from the Lord, especially good things heavenly and spiritual, we are to have our hearts enlarged, and our mouthes opened in magnifying and praying God for the same; that is our duty, and there is reason for it. The reason and ground of it is this;

The glory and praise of God is the principal end of all his actions, *Prov. 16.4. The Lord made all things for his own sake:* that is, for his glorious sake it is, that we are taught to pray for in the first place, that his name may be glorified, and it is the shutting up of all our Petitions: *Thine, O Lord, is Kingdom, power, and glory.* It is the end of all the blessings of God bestowed upon us. Therefore are blessings and good things bestowed on us, *That we should set forth the vertues of God.* as the *Apostle* speaks, *1 Pet. 2.9.* that we should magnifie the Power, Wisdom, Goodnesse, and Mercy of God, in bestowing good things on us, and especially good things heavenly and spiritual:

And therefore doubtlesse, this is a duty incumbent, and lying on us, That whensoever we either think or speak of good things already bestowed on us, or good things we expect and look for from the Lord, especially good things heavenly and spiritual, our hearts are to be enlarged, and our mouthes opened, in magnifying and praising God for the same.

Now this is a duty little thought on, or at least little practised by many in the world. Where is (almost) that man or woman, that gives true praise to  
God



God for the good things of this life beſtowed upon them? Haply, for form and faſhion, they utter ſometimes a few words; I praife God, or I thank the Lord, for this or that good thing. But where is that enlarging of the heart, and that feeling affection, opening the mouth wide in praying God, that was in David? 1 Chro. 29. 10, 11, 12, 13. *Bleſſed be thou, O Lord God of Iſrael, our Father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is Greatneſſe, and power, and Glory, and Victory, and Praiſe: For all that is in the Heaven and earth, is thine: thine is the Kingdome, O Lord, and thou excelleſt as head over all. Both riches, and honour come of thee, and thou reigneſt over all, and in thine hand is power and ſtrength, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give ſtrength unto all. Now therefore, our God we thank thee, and praife thy glorious Name.* He could not find words ſufficient to ſet forth the affection of his heart.

Where is this manner of praying God to be found? Surely, it is hard to be found amongſt men. Well, as the Prophet ſaith, *Hoſe. 4. 13. Though Iſrael play the harlot, yet let not Judah ſin.*

So I ſay in this caſe, Howſoever others neglect this duty, yet let not ſuch as fear the Lord, forget it; let them with feeling hearts magnifie the name of the Lord for good things beſtowed upon them, eſpecially for ſpiritual good things. We are to praife God for the leaſt bit of bread we have to put into our mouthes, much more are we to magnifie his Name, for freeing us from the power of ſin, Hell, Death, and Damnation, and making us his children, his Sons and his Daughters, *yea heires, even joint-heires with Chriſt*, Rom. 8. 17 and by him giving us certain Title to an Inheritance everlaſting, in his own Kingdom.

Oh, theſe things are to affect our hearts and ſouls, and for theſe we are to magnifie the Name of the Lord eſpecially: yea, not onely in word to praife God for theſe ſpiritual bleſſings, but to yeeld to him in lieu of them, real thankſgiving; to labour to answer the Lords mercy in theſe things, by yeelding to him all holy obedience, and by walking humbly before him all the dayes of our life; even out of a feeling acknowledgment of his goodneſſe and mercy towards us in theſe things, to break out and to ſay with David, 2 Sam. 7. 18. *Lord what am I? And who am I, that thou ſhouldeſt think on me, and chuſe me to life and ſalvation, free me from ſin, and hell, death, and damnation, making me thy Child, and Heire of Heaven? Oh, what ſhall I render to thee for theſe great and unſpeakable mercies! Thus ought we to be affected, in reſpect of ſpiritual good things and bleſſings beſtowed on us; and out of a feeling of them, to break out into magnifying and praying the Name of the Lord.*

And a little to quicken us up to this duty: know, that truly to praife God, is the moſt excellent thing we can do whileſt we live here in this world: It is that which the Angels do in Heaven, and it is that we ſhall do for ever in the life to come; yea, it is the moſt comfortable thing we can perform: nothing ſcales up more comfort to the ſoul then this, to be able from the bottom of the heart to praife the Lord, and to give him the glory that is due to his Name. An hypocrite may pray to the Lord from the bottom of his heart, even out of his ſelf-love, but he cannot truly, and from the bottom of his heart, praife the Lord, and give due glory to his name.

And therefore, if thou wouldeſt be exerciſed in that duty that is moſt excellent, and will yeeld thee moſt comfort, remember to magnifie and to praife the Name of the Lord for good things beſtowed on thee, and eſpecially for good things Heavenly and Spiritual; that is the duty of every child of God.

Now, in the laſt place, the Apoſtle adds, *Our Lord*: that is, as we ſhewed, my Lord, and your Lord, and the Lord of all true Believers, both by free donation from his Father, and by right of redemption. Hence I might ſtand to ſhew.

That as many as acknowledge Chriſt their Jeſus, muſt alſo acknowledge him to be their Lord, and muſt take his yoke on them. And therefore in vain do they hold Chriſt to be their Saviour, and to have borne the burden of their ſins, who never ſubmit their necks to his yoke. But of this we have ſpoken heretofore; therefore I paſſe by it: onely note in a word;

Reproof of ſuch as are careleſſe in the practice of this duty of thankſgiving to God, for good things;

### Uſe 2

Such as fear the Lord, are with feeling hearts to magnifie the name of the Lord, for good things beſtowed on them, eſpecially ſpiritual good things.

Real thankſgiving is to be yeelded to the Lord.

Motivs ſtirring us to the practice of this duty.

### Notes

That



**Dott. 3.**  
Christ is Lord  
of all true be-  
lievers in spe-  
cial manner,  
and hath a spe-  
cial care over  
them.

That Christ is the Lord of all true believers in special manner, they being given to him of his Father, and he having redeemed them, he is Lord over them in special manner. And therefore doubtlesse he carries a special hand over them, and he governs them in special manner; he guides them in the way to heaven; he exerciseth them under afflictions and trials, to spiritual obedience; he supports them in their troubles; he defends them against the rage of all enemies whatsoever. And to this purpose speaks the Apostle, *Ephes. 1. 22.* saith he, *Christ is made Head to his Church, to guide and govern it*, as an Head in special manner; but as for all other things, they are made subject under his feet. So that out of all question, Christ hath a special care of his Church, and members of it; he guides and governs them in special manner.

**Use.**  
Comfort to  
all true mem-  
bers of Christ;  
they need not  
fear any ad-  
versary  
power.

And this for the use of it, is a ground of sweet comfort to all true believing members of Christ; and this may cheer them up against the fear of any adversary power whatsoever. For why? *Christ to whom all power is given*, Matth. 28. 18. is their Lord in special manner, and he will certainly guide them in the way to life and salvation, and protect and defend them against the enemies of their salvation. Yea, himself saith, *Joh. 17. 2.* *All power was given him of his Father*, over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to them that he hath given him.

Let then the Devil, Antichrist, and all the enemies of the Church, rage and swell, and do what they can against the Church and members of it, they shall never prevail to the hurt of one soul that belongs to Christ; He hath all the enemies of his Church under his feet, to tread them down to hell at his pleasure; and they may as soone, and as easily, pull Christ out of his Seat in Heaven, as one of his members out of his hands: And that is an excellent comfort to all that truly believe in Christ.

Rom. 7. vers.  
24, 25.

**N**OW before we come to the words following, an Objection is to be removed, that some bring against our Argument, by which we prove the Apostle to be truly regenerate, gathered from his exclamation, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!* And his thanksgiving subjoyned, *I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* For hence we thus reasoned. The Apostle groined under his misery, in regard of sin still abiding in him, and desired deliverance from it, and gave thanks to God for deliverance through Jesus Christ our Lord. And therefore he was a man truly regenerate.

**Object.**

Now against this argument, some Object on this manner: (say they) In that the Apostle complains of his wretchednesse, in regard of sin that was in him, and saith, *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* and subjoynes the grace of God through Jesus Christ; it shewes, that he was a man as yet not delivered from his sin, but that the grace of God, through Jesus Christ, might in time deliver him: and therefore (say they) this is no good argument to prove the Apostle regenerate, and his being in the state of grace, and that he was a man truly regenerate, because he cryes out, *O wretched man, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* and then subjoynes, *The grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* So lyes the Objection. The answer to it is easie.

It stands partly on a wrong translation of some part of the Text.

**Ans.**

I answer to it, It appears plainly by the context, that the Apostle complained of his wretchednesse, in regard of the remainder of sin still abiding in him; and from that he desired to be delivered.

And again, the Apostle saith not, the grace of God through Jesus Christ; but *I thank God, I give thanks to God through Jesus Christ.* He being able to blesse God, and to give him thanks, that in part he was delivered, and did certainly expect full deliverance from the power of sin through Jesus Christ, it is a plain evidence, that he was a man truly regenerate, and in the state of grace: for indeed, none but such as be truly regenerate, and in the state of grace, and none but such as be in Christ, can blesse God for his mercy towards them, in respect of any good thing bestowed on them, or any good thing that they expect or look



look for, from the hands of God. And not to paſſe from this without ſome uſe of it ;

Know it, whoſoever thou art, that thou canſt not bleſſe God, and give him thanks for any good thing beſtowed on thee, with comfort, unleſſe thou be in Chriſt ; No, not for good things ſpiritual : As haply, thou art enlightened, and thou knoweſt God, who is goodneſſe it ſelf, and thou haſt the knowledge of many other good things ; yet canſt thou not bleſſe God with comfort for that illumination and knowledge, unleſſe thou be in Chriſt : Much leſſe canſt thou bleſſe God with comfort for outward good things ; as Meat, Drink, Apparel, Houſe, Land, or the like. No, no ; good things, whether ſpiritual, or outward, beſtowed on thee, they are but given thee, to leave thee without excuſe, and further to encrease thy judgement, unleſſe thou be in Chriſt, and in the ſtate of grace.

*Uſe*  
Men cannot bleſſe God for any good thing beſtowed on them, with comfort, unleſſe they be in Chriſt.

Therefore if thou wouldeſt bleſſe God, and give him thanks for good things beſtowed upon thee, with comfort, thou muſt be able to uſe the *Apoſtles* form of praiſe and thankſgiving, *Ephes. 1. 3. Blessed be God, who hath bleſſed me with ſpiritual, yea, with thoſe temporal bleſſings I do enjoy in Chriſt.*

And if thou aſke me, how that is to be done ?

*Queſt.*  
*Anſw.*

I anſwer thee ; Labour to have part in the merit of Chriſt, to apprehend, and to apply the merit of his death to thy ſelf, and then thou ſhalt be able to bleſſe God with comfort, for good things vouchſafed to thee, becauſe then they are given to thee as pledges of Gods love, and as bleſſings to thee, in and by the merit of Chriſt.

Come we now to the words following ; *Then I my ſelf in my mind ſerve the Law of God, but in my fleſh the Law of ſin.* In theſe words the *Apoſtle* concludes his ſpeech touching the ſpiritual combat, briefly ſetting down the ſumme and ſubſtance of it, ſtill giving inſtance of it in his own perſon, *Then I my ſelf &c.* The connexion of theſe words, with the foregoing matter, is thus : The *Apoſtle* cryed out, *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death ?* and then cheered up himſelf with comfort in and through Chriſt ; In theſe words he concludes to his comfort, that he was not wholly captived to ſin : but though his fleſh and corruption ſtill in part abiding in him, did much trouble him, yet in his mind he ſerved the Law of God. *Then I my ſelf* (ſaith he) *in my mind ſerve the Law of God, but in my fleſh the law of ſin.*

Now here the *Apoſtle* inſiſting in his own perſon, *I my ſelf*, divides himſelf into two parts, *mind and fleſh* ; *In my mind, In my fleſh.* And then he makes known what he did in reſpect of theſe two parts, as namely, that in his mind he ſerved the Law of God, and in his fleſh he ſerved the Law of ſin. And ſo we ſee the dependance of theſe words on foregoing matter, and the general matter and ſubſtance of them.

Now a little for the underſtanding of theſe words : *Then I my ſelf*, or *then*, namely, *I my ſelf*, even *I Paul my ſelf*. It is ſtrange, ſaith *Beza*, that ſome ſhould think the *Apoſtle* ſpoke in the perſon of another, when he ſo expreſſly ſets it down that he meant himſelf (*in my mind, in my fleſh.*) The words (*mind and fleſh*) do not here ſignifie, as *Bellarmino* and the *Papiſts* expound them, the *Apoſtles* ſoul and body ; for he being truly regenerate, was throughout regenerate both in his ſoul and in his body in part ; But *by mind*, we are to underſtand his mind renewed by grace, that is put, by a *Synechdoche*, for his whole regenerate part thoroughout, even the ſame which before he calls *the Inner man*, *Verſ. 22.* and which the *Apoſtle Peter* calls *the hid man of the heart.* *1 Pet. 3. 4.* And ſo alſo by the word (*fleſh*) we are to underſtand his unregenerate part throughout both in body and ſoul, the corruption of nature abiding in him in part, in all the powers of his ſoul, and in all the parts and members of his body, which is uſually called by the name of fleſh in the Scripture.

*Interpretation.*

*Serve the Law of God* : that is, yeeld obedience to the Law of God, know it, delight in it, and do the good things it requires : and by the Law of God is meant, as before I ſhewed, the moral Law of God, which makes known Gods will touching all good duties both towards God and men. The Law of ſin,



that is, the power of sin, the force and commanding power of that corruption that still abides in me, and the evil motions of it: *I yeeld to it, and am many times overcarried by it.* Thus then briefly understand we these words, as if the *Apostle* had said.

*Then namely I Paul my self in mine own person, in my regenerate part, and as I am regenerate, do yeeld obedience to the Law of God, which makes known the good will of God touching all good duties; I know it, and I delight in it, and I do the good things it requires: But in my unregenerate part, as I am unregenerate, I yeeld to the commanding power of that corruption that still abides in me, and the evil motions of it, and am many times overcarried by it.*

First here we see, that the *Apostle* makes it clear, that he speaks of himself, in setting forth the spiritual combate. Some make question and doubt of it, yea some have flatly denyed it, that the *Apostle* in this discourse touching the spiritual combate, meant himself: but the *Apostle* puts it here out of all question, and directly affirms it, that it was of himself that he spake, and he spake not here of himself figuratively, as *1 Cor. 4. 6.* but directly and plainly, that he did not allow the evil which he did, that he did the evil he hated, that he did not the good which he would, that the Law in his members rebelled against the Law of his mind, and that in his mind he served the Law of God, and in his flesh the Law of sin. That these things he found in himself. Hence then we are given to understand, that it is a true conclusion.

*Doct. 4.*  
Gods dearest  
children li-  
ving in this  
world, many  
times do the  
evil they hate  
and do not  
the good they  
would.

That the best of Gods children, the most holy that live on the face of the earth, many times do the evil they hate, and do not the good they would; they are troubled with sinful infirmities, the power of sin rebels against the power of grace that is in them, and leads them captive to the Law of sin. We have here the *Apostle* an excellent instrument of Gods glory, an eminent man in Gods Church, affirming these things of himself with his own mouth, that thus it was with him. And from his example we may conclude, that thus it is with the best of Gods children. For why? as it is *Rom. 15. 4.* *Whatsoever things are written aforetime, are written in the Book of God for our learning.*

We must make use to our selves of the instructions of the word, laid down either generally in the doctrine of it, or particularly in the examples of it: Therefore the *Apostle* thus setting himself before us, that thus it was with him, he being a man truly regenerate, and an holy man of God, we may safely conclude that thus it is with the rest of Gods children. *1 Tim. 1. 16.* The *Apostle* saith, *For this cause was he, being chief of sinners, as there he speaks, received to mercy, that Jesus Christ should shew on him all long suffering, unto the example of them which should, in time to come believe in him unto eternal life.*

So then the examples of holy men of God are set down in the Scripture for our use, for our good, and for our comfort; and we may gather, that seeing it was so with the *Apostle*, that he did the evil he would not have done, therefore it is so with the rest of Gods children.

*Use.*  
Comfort to  
poor weak  
Christians,  
troubled  
with their sin-  
ful infirmities

And this may serve to strengthen poor weak Christians in their comfort, when they are troubled with their sinful infirmities, and feel the rebelling of their own flesh, and doubt whether it were thus with the dear children of God or no.

We have here *Paul* affirming in plain terms, that thus it was with himself, and from his example they may gather comfort to themselves and thus conceive, that surely it is no otherwise with them then with the rest of Gods children. It is a subtilty of Satan, when the poor soul being pressed with the weight of sinful infirmities that cleave to it, begins to gather some comfort, and to cheer up it self by looking on the example of *Paul*, and thus to conceive with it self: Thus it was with the holy *Apostle*; my case is no other then it was with him, presently to snib and to check that comfort with this suggestion, What art thou compared to *Paul*? He was a man of rare gifts, and of great grace, and a man that had a great measure of holiness and sanctification, and darest thou compare thy self with him?



The poor ſoul may eaſily answer him, It is true indeed, I am nothing, compared to *Paul*: but yet *Paul* hath ſet himſelf before me for an example, that thus it was with him, that he did the evil he hated, and the good he would have done, he did not, and he being an excellent man, a man of rare gifts, and of great grace, my comfort is the greater; I may from his example conclude, that the beſt of Gods children have their weakneſſes and ſinful infirmities, and therefore no marvel though it be ſo with me, even the *Apoſtle*, who had ſuch a meaſure of Faith, that he could ſay, *Rom. 8. 38. I am perſwaded that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other Creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* Yet he out of his own mouth affirms thus much of himſelf, that he had his ſinful infirmities, and from his example I may conclude, that ſo it is with the beſt of Gods children: and therefore I have no cauſe to be utterly dejected, and put out of all hope, becauſe of my weakneſſes and ſinful infirmities. No, no: I will labour and ſtrive againſt them and in time I ſhall be able to overcome them in Chriſt, I ſhall have a full victory and conqueſt over them.

In the next place obſerve we, that the *Apoſtle* here ſpeaking of himſelf, he divides himſelf into mind and fleſh, *in my mind; in my fleſh*: meaning by his mind, his regenerate part, and by his unregenerate part the corruption of nature ſtill in part abiding in him. Hence then we are again put in mind of this we have had occaſion to ſpeak of;

That the moſt holy, and the moſt regenerate that live on the face of the earth, have in them both fleſh and Spirit; they have in them both grace and corruption ſtill in part abiding: the deareſt of the Saints and Children of God, are not freed from ſin abiding in them altogether, but they have corruption and ſin ſtill in part remaining in them, and they are partly fleſh, and partly Spirit, yet this is not ſo to be underſtood, as if Gods Children were diſtinct and ſeveral parts, fleſh and Spirit, as if they had grace in one power, and faculty of the ſoul, and fleſh and corruption in another; no, but that they are wholly and throughout, partly fleſh, and partly Spirit; the whole mind of a regenerate perſon is partly fleſh and partly Spirit, in part it is inlightned, and made able to underſtand and conceive good things, and in part it remains blind and ignorant.

And ſo it is with his will and affections, and other powers and faculties of his ſoul; they are throughout partly Spiritual, and partly carnal, and there is fleſh and Spirit throughout in all the powers of the ſoul, and in all the parts and members of the body, even in the beſt of Gods children, ſo long as they live on the face of the earth. *Prov. 20. 9. Who can ſay, I have made mine heart clean, I am clean from my ſin? I am in this world free from all reliques of ſin?* As if he had ſaid, None can ſay it. *1 King. 8. 46. There is no man that ſineth not,* ſaith Solomon. No man living but hath ſin in him, and it breaks out into actual ſin at one time or other, *1 Joh. 1. 8. If we ſay that we have no ſin, we deceive our ſelves, and truth is not in us.* *Gal. 5. 16.* ſaith the *Apoſtle*, *Walk in the Spirit.* He ſpeaks to them that had the Spirit, and were able to walk in the Spirit; and he ſubjoynes, *Ye ſhall not fulfill the luſts of the fleſh*: there is fleſh and the luſts of it ſtill in you.

Theſe and many other teſtimonies cleer and confirm this truth to us, that the moſt holy, and moſt regenerate that live on the face of the earth, have in them both fleſh and Spirit, there is grace and corruption ſtill in part abiding in all the powers of their ſouls, and in all the parts and members of their bodies. Howſoever the Lord could free his children altogether from the corruption of nature, whileſt they live here in this world, by the powerful work of his holy Spirit, yet he is pleaſed to ſuffer ſome reliques of it ſtill to abide in them, for ſpecial good cauſes.

As for the beating down of pride, leſt they ſhould be too much lifted up in themſelves.

For the exerciſe of their faith, their hope, their patience, and other graces.

For the ſtirring of them up to fervent prayer.

Obſer

Doct. 5.

There is both fleſh and ſpirit in the beſt of Gods children, living in this world.

1.

2.

3.



4. For the manifestation of his own Power, in upholding them in their temptations.

For these and the like good causes, is the Lord pleased to suffer some remnants of corruption still to abide in his children, and so the best that live on the face of the earth, have in them both flesh and Spirit, both grace and corruption. And this, for the use of it ;

Use. 1.  
Some Popish  
opinions con-  
futed.

First meets with some erroneous opinions, as that of *Bellarmino* and the *Pa-*  
*pists*, touching the liberty of the Gospel: They teach, that by the libery of the Gospel men are altogether freed from sin: so that, as they say, sin is thoroughly dead, and not onely not imputed, but not alive, not having any being in the righteous: so they hold. Now that is a foul and grosse error, directly contrary to the truth now delivered.

2. Again, this truth meets with that foolish conceit of the Familists and others, who dream of a perfection of inherent holiness, grace and sanctification in the time of this life.

Familists also  
confuted.

The best and the most holy have in them not onely grace, but corruption still abiding in part in all the powers of the soul, and in all the parts and members their bodies, and that keeps them, that they cannot possibly aspire to perfection of holiness in the time of this life.

3.  
The best of  
Gods chil-  
dren are still  
to be purging  
out corrup-  
tion, and still  
to be grow-  
ing in grace.

Again, is it so, that the most holy, and the most regenerate, whilst they live here in this world, have in them not onely Spirit, but flesh also? have they in them aswell a measure of corruption, as a measure of grace? Surely, then it concerns the best of us, whosoever we be, that have attained the greatest measure of grace, still to be purging out corruption, and still to be growing in grace, and still to be gathering increase of grace: and though we have as great a measure of grace and holiness, as the best of God children ever had, yet still we have flesh in us, and still we have our weaknesses.

And be we sure of this, where we are weak, be it in knowledge, or be it in affection; there at one time or other we shall be assaulted and tried, and there the Tempter will come against us: and therefore we are every day more and more to be purging out the old lump, and still to be casting off the old man piece after piece, and every day to labour with our own hearts to empty out the corruption of them; our work in this kind is never at an end, whilst we live here in this world: and to this purpose we are to be constant in the use of the means: In hearing the Word, in reading, in prayer, in applying the power of Christ his death to our own souls. And think not because thou hast a great measure of knowledge and other good gifts, that therefore thou hast no need to attend on the ministry of the word, No, no; thou hast still flesh and corruption in thee and thou hast need still to use good means, that may serve to purge it out continually; that is thy duty.

Obfer.

Now further observe we, that the *Apostle* dividing himself into mind and flesh, he makes known how it was with him in respect of these two parts; as that in his mind in his regenerate part, he served the Law of God: but in his flesh, in his part unregenerate, he served the Law of sin. The point hence is this, That the Spirit, and the flesh, Grace and corruption, they carry Gods chil-

Doct. 6.  
Grace & cor-  
ruption carry  
Gods chil-  
dren contrary  
ways.

dren divers, yea, contrary ways: One carries them to that which is holy and good, and the other to that which is evil and sinful; grace in Gods children, that carries them to think, will and effect, purpose, desire and endeavour the doing of good and holy things: and the corruption that is in them, that carries them to the clean contrary, to think, will, effect, purpose, desire, and endeavour the doing of evil and wicked things.

Thus are Gods children diversly carried, grace carries them one way, and corruption that hales and puls them another way; and to this purpose the *Apostle* speaks plainly. *Gal. 5. 17. The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the same things that ye would.* The flesh that stirres up evil thoughts, motions and lusts: The Spirit, that stirres up good thoughts, motions, purposes and desires, saith



saith the Prophet, *Isai. 30. 21. Thine eares shall hear a word behind thee, saying, That is the way, walk ye in it, when thou turnest to the right hand, and when thou turnest to the left.* As if he had said, Thine own corruption will be ready to suggest evil to thee, to turn thee out of the way of holiness: but the Spirit of God in thee, that will suggest good things to thee, and tell thee in what way thou oughtest to walk.

We see then, that grace and corruption, they carry Gods children divers, yea, contrary wayes. And the reason is this.

They are contrary grounds and beginnings, *Gal. 5. 17.* yea, they are as it were Lords and masters of contrary dispositions; one is disposed to good, and the other to evil; and therefore no marvel though they carry contrary wayes, even to contrary thoughts, and affections, purposes, desires and indevours.

Now here haply some may demand, whether grace and corruption do concur and meet together in one and the same action, and do carry Gods children divers or contrary wayes in one and the same work, yea or no?

To this I answer, That in some sort they do, namely thus: In a good action grace carries forward to the doing of it, as it ought to be done, and corruption also intermeddles and hinders it from perfection, yea it defiles it, and makes the best thing that is done by a child of God, unable to stand in Gods sight, if he should not look on it in mercy.

And on the other side, in an evil action, corruption carries forward to the doing of it, and therein also grace hath a working, not to the acting of it, but to curbe and restrain the flesh, so that a child of God cannot do evil with full and habitual consent of will. *1 Job. 3. 9.* The seed of grace remains in him, and he cannot sin, because thus grace and corruption do concur in one and the same action, whether good or evil.

\*This serves to discover, that there is no good thing done by any child of God, but it is stained with sin, intermeddling corruption defiles it.

Then (say the Papists) it pleaseth not God, if it be sinful. An idle cavil.

Indeed, if it were absolutely sinful, then it could not please God: but it is holy and good, for the kind as it is enjoined by God, and as it comes from the Spirit of God, though in the manner of doing it fails, and comes short of perfection, and is sinful, that sinfulness the Lord pardons, and so accepts of it in and through Christ, as pleasing to him.

Again, is it so, that grace and corruption carry Gods children contrary wayes? grace carries them to good, and corruption to evil? Then we may not think it strange when we feel our selves so carried, and when we would think of good things, and delight in them, and do them, we are hindered, and we cannot think of them, delight in them, and do them as we desire; it is the case of the dearest of Gods children many times when they would think of good things, their minds are carried from them, or they are dull and heavy in thinking of them, and when they would believe the sweet promises of the Word of God, they are oppressed with unbelief, or the like: it is a mercy of God when thou feelest thy self carried contrary wayes, thou wouldest think of good things, delight in them, and do them, and thine own corruption carries thee a contrary way, if thou feelest it with grief; thousands in the world are carried but one way, they go on in a evil course, their minds are carried after evil, they effect it, and do it with pleasure, it never troubles them; and therefore I say, it is a mercy of God vouchsafed to thee, if thou feelest thy self carried away from God with great grief.

Thus it is with Gods Children, yea, doubtlesse Gods children think their present corruption ever the greatest: Because the more grace they have, the more they feel their corruption. And as one saith well; They that hold themselves to be the children of God, and yet feel not themselves carried contrary wayes, in respect of grace and corruption, they have either *Angelical* perfection (which let them take to themselves that can) or they have not as yet the Spirit of

Reason.

Quest.

Answ.

\*Use 1.  
The best good thing done by a child of God is stained with sin.

Object.

Answ.

Use 2  
We are not to think it strange when we feel our selves carried contrary wayes.



of Christ. And therefore let not this trouble thee, because thou feelest thy self carried contrary wayes, when thou wouldst think of good things, delight in them, and do them, thou art hindered and thou canst not think of them, delight in them, and do them as thou desirest.

**Use 3.**  
Grace must  
be kept in  
continual ex-  
ercise.

Lastly, this being so, that grace and corruption carry Gods children contrary wayes: This must teach them to keep grace in continual exercise. For certainly if grace be not stirring and working, and in exercise, corruption will be stirring and working: and therefore keep thy faith, thy love to God, to his Children, thy Zeal to Gods glory, and such like graces, in continual exercise.

Now in that the Apostle saith, *In my mind I serve the Law of God, and in my flesh the law of sin*: The Papists have this note, (say they) Nothing done by concupiscence, whereunto the Spirit, reason or mind of man consents not, can make him guilty before God. A very absurd and grosse conceit. For whatsoever is done contrary to the Law of God, or swarving from his Law, it is sinne, and makes a man guilty before God; yea, the least evil thought arising from a mans own corruption, though he reject it and yeeld no consent to it at all, yet it makes him guilty of sin, yea any evil done of infirmity, when a Child of God being carried aside by violence of temptation, or strength of corruption, doth the evil he would not do, and which he disallowes in his judgment, yet it makes him guilty before God in it self. Indeed he is not held guilty of that evil, because the Lord is pleased to look on him, in and through Christ, and by his grace in him to acquit and discharge him of the guiltinesse of that sin; but in it self it makes him guilty and liable to the curse of God, and to everlasting perdition.

*Soli Deo Gloria.*

**FINIS.**





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